

THE LIFE
OF
REV. JAMES O'KELLY

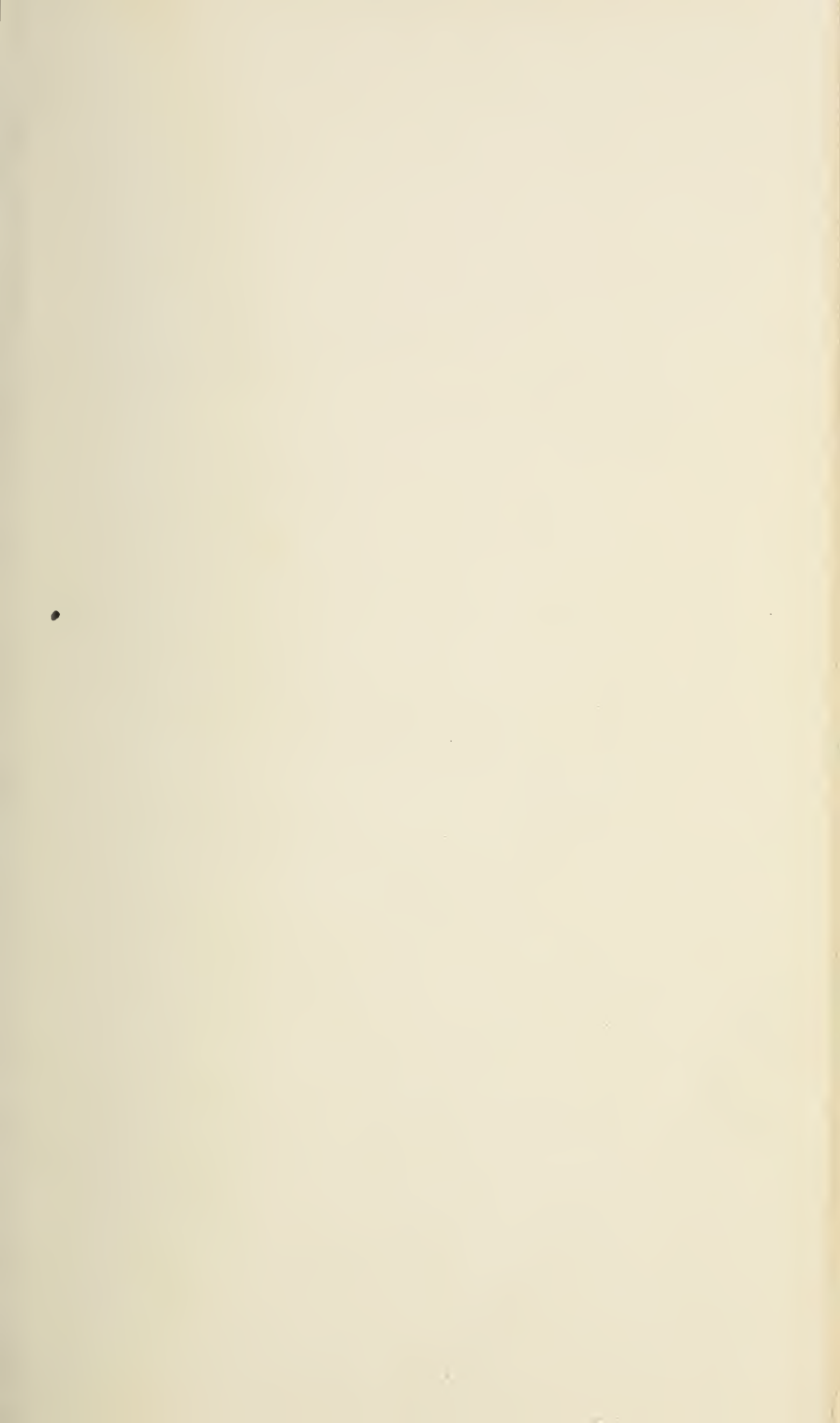
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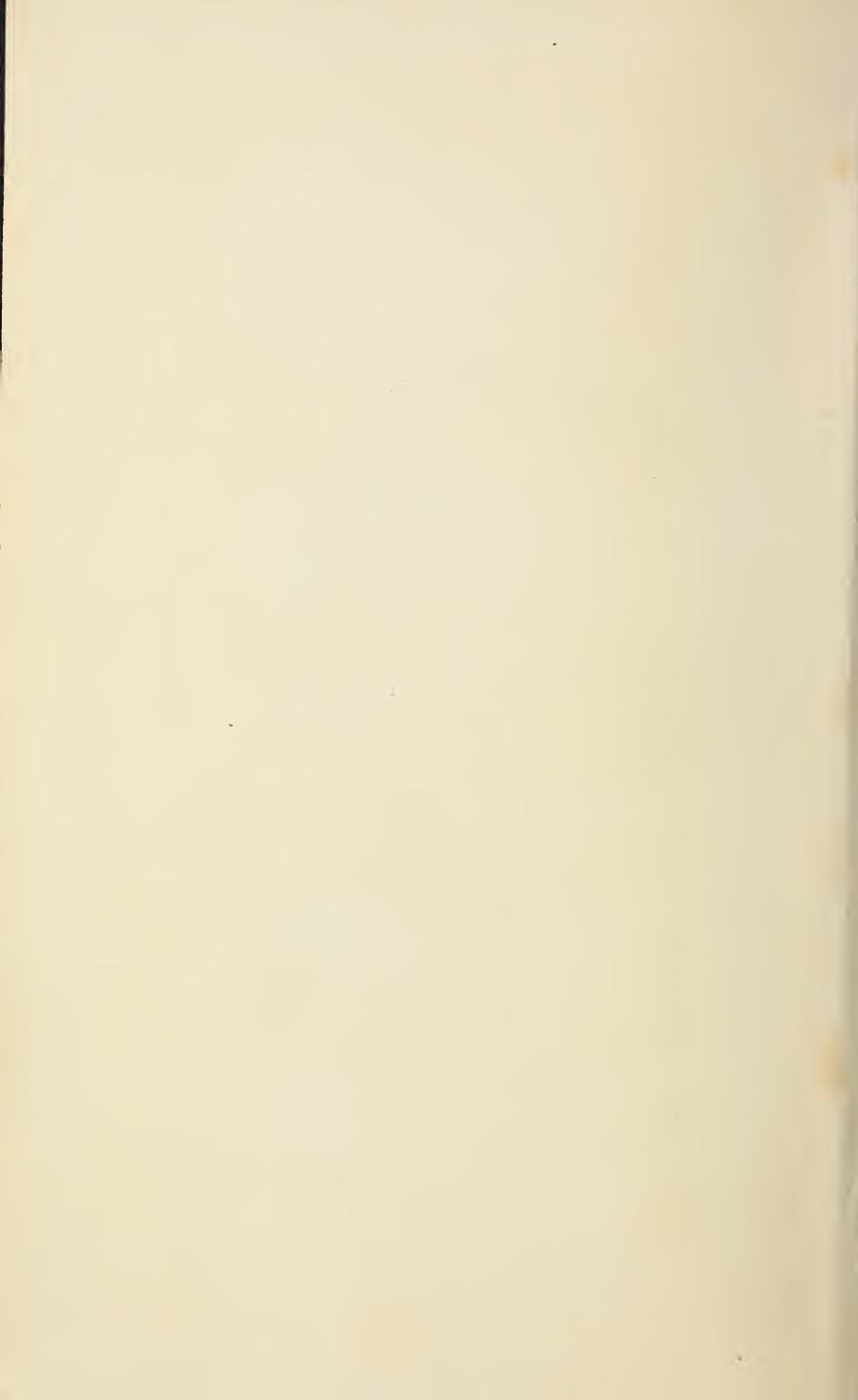
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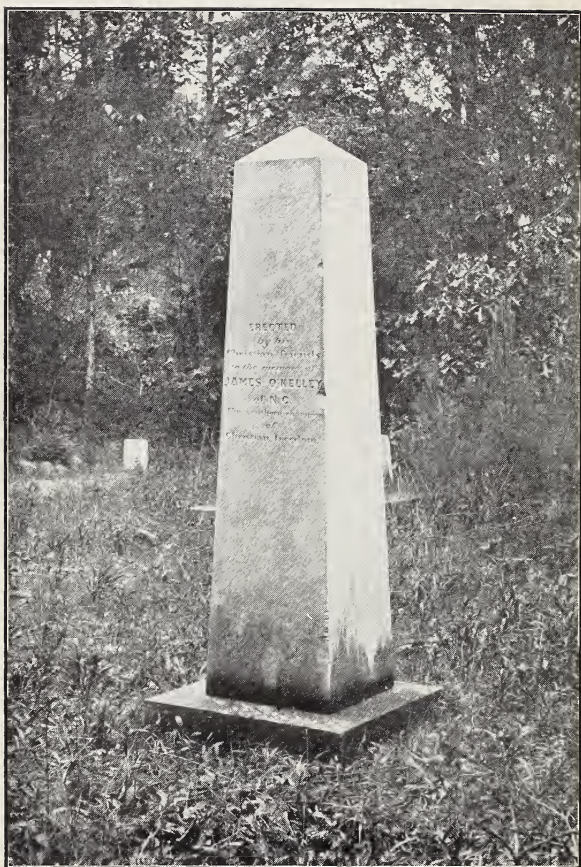


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Monument over the Grave of James O'Kelly, Chatham County, North Carolina. "Erected to the Memory of * * * The Southern Champion of Christian Freedom." See page 230.

THE LIFE
OF
REV. JAMES O'KELLY
AND
THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN
CHURCH IN THE SOUTH

BY
W. E. MACCLENNY, PH.B.
SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA

1910
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INTRODUCTION

Biography is the most interesting and instructive form of history because it illumines the page with personal motives, and incidents.

The author of this "Life of James O'Kelly," W. E. MacClenny, has rendered valuable service to his church and future generations by gathering from many sources, by painstaking and expensive research, a large fund of information and weaving it into a literary fabric that will endure.

Much of the information will be new to most readers and a juster interpretation of history than anything before written. It removes from the fair name of this great reformer the aspersions cast upon him in the heat and excitement of the times that colored men's feelings and language. The calmer feelings and words of Coke and Asbury toward the close of their lives make amends for any injustice of earlier years when debate and ambition controlled their attitude toward O'Kelly.

The author's statement, "that he began to gather this information and then decided to give it to others," contains the growth and output of generous investigation. Those who improve their own minds and hearts become benefactors in the line of their tastes and efforts. In this field of research the author has scanned many a dusty page, turned over many a heap of rubbish, consulted many a record and many relatives and friends of this unique man, and his unique church, and he has thus brought into one small volume a mass of facts, cast light upon them, and thus made a contribution not only to the true history of the Christian Church, but the his-

tory of the times and religion in this country in the early years of the nineteenth century.

The careful reader will see that the Christian movement, under O'Kelly, added a new factor, not only in the form of a more primitive church, but that the movement greatly benefited the cause of Methodism by modifying, later, its form of government. The later writings of Methodist historians help to place O'Kelly in his true light before the world and to remove the prejudice that once existed between those two bodies or denominations.

In addition to these benefits to be derived from reading this history, the author has wisely added, as an appendix, extensive and characteristic selections from O'Kelly's own writings. These show clearly that his soul was imbued with Biblical and spiritual truth and sentiments. His pages glow like an anvil with holy fire and the ring of his hammer is the stroke of an honest man. He sought no worldly honor, no earthly gain, no human favor; the liberty of man, the freedom of the church, and the glory of God seem to have been his aim. To rescue his good name from oblivion, to put the cause for which he gave all in its true light before the world, to defend the position of the Christian Church, and to support the claim for Christian freedom which has characterized the Christian Church for a hundred years is to merit the approbation of fair-minded men; and this the author of this work has done.

W. W. STALEY.

SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA,
January 18th, 1910.

PREFACE

Should any one inquire as to what impulse caused me to begin this research, I should reply that, being particularly fond of history, a member of the Christian Church, and knowing that no such work had ever been written, I began to gather the information contained herein for my own instruction, and then decided, after much hesitation, to give the results of my research to others. I am fully aware of the limitations put upon me by my vocation, not being engaged in literary pursuits, but as no one else seemed ready or willing to attempt it, and feeling that it had been neglected all too long, I here offer the public the best efforts my ability and circumstances would allow.

One day, when a student at Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Virginia, I casually came across a copy of McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, and there found an article on Rev. James O'Kelly. The tone of this article did not seem to be in accord with what I had learned of O'Kelly from other sources. This article set me to a diligent search to see if the statements and impressions recorded there were true. I began to gather information from every known source about O'Kelly, his life and work. This proved a slow and tedious task, covering a period of several years, and a scope of wide investigation.

Books of the Christian Church and publications were carefully gone through, with but little light found on the subject. Accidentally, a copy of the *Minutes of*

The Methodist Conferences Held in America up to about 1813 was found, and there Mr. O'Kelly's official record, as a Methodist minister, and Presiding Elder in Southern Virginia, was secured. Next a trip was made to the Virginia State Library, Richmond, and there new history was found. Later, another trip was made to Randolph-Macon College, Ashland, Virginia, where historical rooms were opened to me, and much new data was obtained. The officials of this institution were very kind to me, and they have my thanks for the same. In the meantime correspondence was commenced with members of the O'Kelly family, and with well-informed men and women of the Christian Church, both North and South. From this source many facts were gleaned.

In the fall of 1905 a series of articles was published in the *Christian Sun*, as a result of my work that far and some readers were kind enough to send me many additional facts about O'Kelly's life and work. Several interested ones, whose judgment I considered good, asked that the results of my research be published in book form. My work of research, investigation and composition was then begun afresh.

Soon a copy of Dr. Drinkhouse's *History of the Methodist Reform and the Methodist Protestant Church* was procured, and this was of invaluable aid to me in the work. Prof. P. J. Kernodle, M.A., who has perhaps done more in collecting the early history of the Christians than any other man, kindly gave me valuable aid. Prof. W. A. Harper, M.A., Elon College, kindly secured for me, from the North Carolina State Library,

important facts regarding O'Kelly's family history. Rev. J. O. Atkinson, D.D., kindly loaned me a copy of Mr. O'Kelly's *Apology*, and this threw more light on his life. In the meantime the records of a great many counties in Virginia and North Carolina were searched to see what they would reveal. Mr. J. Elmer Long, an attorney-at-law of Pittsboro, North Carolina, was kind enough to search the records of Chatham County, North Carolina, and secure for me a copy of James O'Kelly's will, and other valuable data. Rev. W. G. Clements has read a copy of Chapter I of the present volume, and, being well acquainted with the early history of the Christians, made some corrections, and gave other valuable information. Rev. J. B. Dunn, Episcopal minister, Suffolk, Virginia, the official historian of Nansemond County, Virginia, has helped me many times in my work, by the use of his library, and suggestions made after reading the manuscript. Besides these, many others have helped me greatly in securing information. To any and to all who have thus aided me I wish here and now to extend my sincere thanks, and grateful appreciation.

Many references and footnotes are given so that those who have a desire to investigate further may do so. It is regarded as useless to give a long list of the works consulted. There are errors, no doubt, and the author will regard it a great favor if these may be pointed out to him. Any new data will be thankfully received, so that, should there ever be a demand for a later edition of this work, it may be an improvement on the present.

With this foreword my work goes to the public with the wish that it may be counted worthy of a place in many homes, and that it may help some author in the future to write a more complete history of the early years of the Christians.

W. E. MACCLENNY.

SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA,
1910.

CHAPTER I.

NATIONALITY, GENEALOGY, CHILDHOOD, YOUTH, EDUCATION, AND EARLY ASSOCIATES.

There is some speculation as to where Rev. James O'Kelly was born, and the exact date of his birth. In fact, it is doubtful if there is any man of such prominence, in his day, concerning whom writers vary so much in this regard. *Appleton's Encyclopedia of American Biography* says that he was born in the year 1735. Others bring the date of his birth down to as late as 1757. Appleton is, perhaps, more nearly correct than others, for it is a well established fact that he was in the ninety-second year of his age at the time of his death, October 16th, 1826. The most authentic historians, seem to agree that this was the date of his death.*

In regard to the place of his birth, Stephens, in his *History of Methodism*, says that he was born in Southern Virginia. Dr. Bennett, in his *Memorials of Methodism in Virginia*, seems to confirm this statement. Many other writers are of the same opinion, while some say that he was of Irish birth.

A writer in the *Christian Sun* (supposed to be Maj. R. W. York), says:

"James O'Kelly is generally supposed to have been born in Mecklenburg County, Virginia, or some one of

* See *Raleigh Register* and *North Carolina Gazette*, of Friday, November 3, 1826, under the caption, *Died*. A copy in the North Carolina State Library. See also quotation from Rev. John P. Lemay, in the last chapter of this work.

the counties on the North Carolina line. The tradition in the O'Kelly family is that he and his wife, Miss Elizabeth Meeks, came from Virginia, and *lived* in the same neighborhood before their marriage. The maternal name of Meeks is still preserved occasionally among the descendants.

"Notwithstanding the fact that tradition assigns Mecklenburg County, Virginia, as the place of his nativity, yet there are facts that can not be doubted which point to Wake County, North Carolina, quite as strongly perhaps, which I will briefly state, and the facts themselves will appear more fully hereafter, viz: 1st. He was a resident of North Carolina through the Revolutionary period; 2d, he stood his draft repeatedly, and once put in a substitute, and once served on post himself" (We will say in passing, however, that we have not been able to find his name on the rosters of the ten North Carolina regiments that served in that war. The name of Patrick O'Kelly alone appears in the Revolutionary records of North Carolina for 1777, and his name was omitted in September, 1778. This we gleaned from the *North Carolina State Papers*, edited by Judge Walter Clark); "3d, his ministerial labors were entirely in North Carolina during the Revolution; 4th, to prove his devotion to Whiggery in his *Apology* he continually alludes to his early life, and also his adventures in the Revolution, and to distinguished persons in North Carolina. He never spoke well of England nor anything English."

Until a few years ago it was commonly believed that Rev. James O'Kelly was a schoolmate of Patrick Henry

and Thomas Jefferson, an affirmation formerly often made from pulpit and press. However, it is to be doubted if he attended college in America, as his name does not appear in the register of matriculates in William and Mary, Princeton, or Harvard. He did not attend Christ's College, Cambridge, England, where the Wesleys were educated.*

After a most careful investigation and much research, the writer is of the opinion that James O'Kelly was born in Ireland, and spent the early part of his life in that country.

In Burke's *Landed Gentry of England and Ireland* (1868),† we find a sketch of the lineage of the O'Kelly family of Ireland. From this we learn that Cellach, Chief of Hy Many, and fourteenth in the descent from Main Mor, was the progenitor from whom the O'Kellys derive their surname. The annals of the family go back as far as 960 A. D., and they were represented in 1863 by Dennis H. Kelly, Esq., of Castle Kelly, County Rosecommon, Ireland. (In some instances the "O' " has been dropped, while in others it is still retained.)

Diarmaid O'Kelly, who is stated to have been Prince of Hy Many for sixty years, was the father of Conchobhar Moenmaighe O'Kelly, stated to have been Prince, or Arch Chief, of Hy Many for forty years, and, according to *The Annals of the Four Masters*, he built O'Kelly's Church at Clanmoenaise in the year 1167.

* From letters of officers of these institutions in the writer's possession.

† A copy in the Carnegie Library, Norfolk, Virginia.

Another member of the family in prominence from 1861 to 1870 was Cornelius Joseph O'Kelly, Esq., of Gallagher Castle, County Galway, Ireland. He was magistrate for the County of Galway, and High Sheriff in 1861. Later he was Lord, Manor of Gallagher, and Count of the Holy Roman Empire.

Ralph O'Kelly is mentioned as Archbishop of Cashell, Ireland, and also as the author of a book of common law, and of one, or, as some say, seven books of *Familiar Letters*, and other works, none of which are now extant.

William O'Kelly, of Athlone, was chief of Hy Many, and after King Edward's accession to the Crown, his Majesty, by letter to the L. D. St. Ledger, dated at Greenwich, 7th April, 1547, directed that "in respect of his faithful and diligent service, done to his father and himself, he would be one of his Privy Council. In which year the Castle of Athlone, at his Motion and Instigation, being repaired and garrisoned by order of the Council, the Charge thereof was committed to him, which he most effectually performed, notwithstanding the opposition of Dominick O'Kelly, and other powerful chiefs in Connaught. Letters of protection were granted MacMurrough, O'Kelly, and O'MeLaglin."

From the above it is evident that the subject of our sketch was a man of high birth on his paternal side, the family having been identified with the vicinity of Gallagher for ages.

On his maternal side it was equally as good, and several members of the family took Holy Orders. In Betham's *Baronetage of England With General Tables*, Vol. 3, page 124, mention is made of William O'Kelly

of the Chetewode family, and on page 126, under twenty-one of the family line we find "James, who went to Virginia." (This James O'Kelly we have all right to believe was the subject of our sketch, although it has no infallible proof.) Thus we gather that he was a grandson of John Chetewode, who was related to John Leech, of Mapwich.*

John Chetewode, James O'Kelly's maternal grandfather, took Holy Orders and was a Doctor of Divinity, and one of his descendants was later a minister and stationed near Cork, Ireland, while another was a Captain in the Thirty-third regiment, in recent years.

From the above it is seen that James O'Kelly's ancestors on one side were church builders, and on the other side, preachers, or priests, as they were called. We learn that he was connected with some of the best families of both England and Ireland. Among these may be mentioned the Drewrys, the Knightlys, the Shutes, and others.

In view of the above facts, and the early traditions of the Christians, we come to this conclusion: James O'Kelly was born and educated in Ireland, came to America in early life, seems to have settled near Moring's Post-office, in Surry County, Virginia, and lived there for some time before he moved to North Carolina. Rev. W. G. Clements, Morrisville, North Carolina, relates the following: "It has been my pleasure to talk with Mr. Moring, Mr. J. J. Jinks, and Rev. Chastine Allen. All these had heard O'Kelly preach and Rev.

* A copy of Betham's work in the North Carolina State Library.

Chastine Allen rode and preached with O'Kelly, and *these all* said that he moved from Surry County, Virginia, to Chatham County, North Carolina. There is a tradition that James O'Kelly, when a young man, worked his way to this country from Ireland on a ship and soon settled in Virginia."

While living in Virginia it is likely that he made the acquaintance of Mr. Henry and Mr. Jefferson. Here, too, he doubtless met Elizabeth Meeks, his future wife. The Meeks family first settled near Jamestown, Virginia, in the early days of the colony, and later began to move southward. It seems that the Meekses and the O'Kellys have been neighbors for some time, for J. T. Meeks, now of Concord, North Carolina, but a native of Banks County, Georgia, relates that his grandparents came from Virginia, and that his grandfather, on his mother's side, was named Milton O'Kelly, and we are confident that these are some of the same family. A few years ago there was a record of the Meeks family, from the time of settlement in Virginia to that date, in possession of one of the descendants in Banks County, Georgia.*

As to James O'Kelly's educational advantages, history seems to be almost silent. If he was born in Ireland, as facts indicate, he may have attended Trinity College, Dublin. At any rate, from his work, in later life, we are led to believe that he was educated for his time, and was perhaps a good Greek scholar, and in ad-

* This is further confirmed by the fact that Revs. John P. O'Kelly, James O'Kelly, and Francis D. O'Kelly were members of the Georgia and Alabama Conference, in 1851. They seem to have lived in Baldwin County, Georgia.

dition to this, was of powerful natural ability. He says in Chapter 28 of his *Apology*, while speaking of Bishop Asbury's educational advantages, "while he (Asbury) was an utter stranger to a classical education, being like me born of poor parentage." This shows that Mr. O'Kelly did not regard himself as a good scholar. His work, *Letters from Heaven Consulted*, published in Hillsborough, North Carolina, in 1822, is spoken of in the following way by critics: "The literary ability of this is very fair."

There is evidence in some parts of his *Apology* that he had a fair knowledge of the Greek and the Latin languages, and that he was very well versed in general history.

Tradition tells that in his early life he was a great champion fighter and fiddler. As the Irish are particularly fond of fighting, we think it quite probable, that James O'Kelly, like Philip Embury, one of the Irishmen (Robert Strawbridge being the other), who became the first local Methodist preachers in America, grew up without much thought of religion, and in his early days enjoyed all the sports of such a life.

"As to the date of his marriage to Elizabeth Meeks, who through his long and checkered life shared his joys and divided his sorrows, we have no definite information. Tradition is dumb, except that they knew each other long before marriage. Certain it is they were married not very late in life; Mr. O'Kelly being under twenty-five and she under twenty. This would put the date of their marriage about 1760.*"

* This is from Maj. York's sketch.

To this union two sons were born, John and William. As John's name is mentioned first in the will of his father we presume that he was the older. Again, as only two sons were mentioned in the will we presume that these were all the children he had. William O'Kelly was born April 29th, 1763. To the influence of his son, his father perhaps owes his prominence to-day. He was named William O'Kelly, after his grandfather O'Kelly.

When the Methodist preachers came into the Cedar Creek country, Elizabeth O'Kelly, his wife, was at once converted and joined the society. His son, William O'Kelly, then only twelve years old, likewise was converted and joined, and was instrumental in his father's conversion. He felt even at that young age that he ought to preach. He conversed with his father who dissuaded him from it, alleging his great youth, and that he might in the heat and ardor of youth fall from such a high station. William desisted, went up into the New Hope valley in Chatham County, to a Methodist preaching place somewhere on the hill where Mr. Thomas J. Herndon now resides, married Miss Mary E. Merritt, a Methodist lady, March 27, 1787, and settled there. William did not become a preacher, but he did become a state representative, and went from Chatham County to the North Carolina Legislature as early as 1805, and was there in 1812, 1814, 1815, and 1816. In 1818 he was State Senator from his district.

In the summer of 1774 (?) James O'Kelly turned his attention to religious matters, and was soon converted. In regard to this we quote the following from his own account:

“My first mental alarm was not through the blessed means of preaching; but by the kind illuminations of the invisible Holy Spirit. I saw by this Divine light, that I was without God and destitute of any reasonable hope in my present state.

“Now being moved by faith through fear, I attempted to flee the wrath to come, and seek a place of refuge!

“But, O, what violent opposition did I meet with! After many sorrowful months I formed one resolution, with a low cadence of voice, and fearful apprehension, I ventured like Queen Esther who approached the king’s presence, at the risk of her life, so I ventured in a way of prayer, to speak to the Almighty! With the Bible in my hand, I besought the Lord to help me, and declaring that during life, that sacred Book should be my guide, and at the close, if I sunk to perdition, said I, Just, O God! yet dreadful! but if thy clemency and divine goodness should at last rescue me from the jaws of a burning hell, this miracle of grace shall be gratefully remembered by me, a moment of mercy!

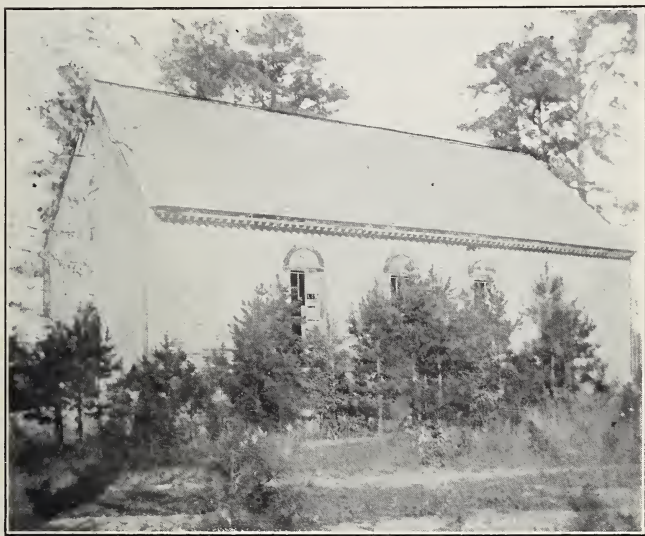
“The things which followed, which were such things as belong to my peace, the inexpressible change, the instantaneous cure, I am incapable of speaking; but O, my soul was lodged in Immanuel’s breast, the city of refuge; the ark of my rest.

“And in those days God sent preachers into our dark regions who were burning and shining lights. They came to us under the direction of John Wesley, whose name to me is of precious memory. His writings magnified the Bible and gave it preference and honor. He declared he regarded the authority of no writings but

the inspired. He urged the sufficiency of the Scripture for faith and practice, saying, 'We will be downright Christians.' This doctrine pleased me and so did the conduct of the holy preachers. I entered the connection, and soon entered the list among the traveling ministers, where I labored both day and night, pleading with God for that connection in particular, and the world in general."

It is not known at this time where he first met the Methodist preachers. It may have been in Virginia as we are not informed as to the date of his removal to North Carolina.

Immediately after his conversion everything irreligious was abandoned, his iron will knowing no half-way ground, and he deliberately laid his fiddle on a huge fire and burned it. Whatever he did, he wished to do well.



A TYPICAL COLONIAL CHURCH

Old Cypress Church, about three miles from Morings P. O., Surry County, Va.,
where Rev. James O'Kelly perhaps began to preach.

CHAPTER II.

EARLY MINISTRY—CONDITIONS, IN VIRGINIA, OF CHURCH AND STATE AT THIS PERIOD—FIRST METH- ODIST MINISTERS VISIT THE STATE.

All Methodist historians agree that O'Kelly began his ministerial career at an early age, having been converted while young. *Encyclopedia of Methodism*, page 678, says he began to preach about the middle of the Revolutionary War. He must not have been as young as they supposed, for he was about thirty-nine years old when he was converted. As to what trade or occupation he followed before he was converted and began to preach, history is silent. From facts recently discovered it may have been that he was a man of some means, and did not have to earn his bread "in the sweat of his face."

When and where he preached his first sermon is not known. The first mention we have of his preaching in Methodist history was in an old colonial church in southern Virginia, about the middle of the Revolutionary War, or the year 1777.* The *Christian Sun* of January 7, 1886, in an article by Maj. R. W. York, says: "Now it was January 2d, 1775, that James O'Kelly was licensed to preach, or authorized to preach, and sent out, one of that great immortal band of Methodist lay preachers, but he was not ordained either deacon, or priest (elder). No Episcopal bishop would

* McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature*, etc., under "James O'Kelly."

have ordained him to either order while being a Methodist. Methodism was under ban in the Established Church. One pious and godly (Devereux) Jarratt is mentioned in all Methodist histories in Virginia. He made stated visits among the Methodists for the purpose of baptizing and administering the Lord's Supper. He traveled with Mr. O'Kelly to his societies for this purpose. Now, let the historic fact be remembered that from January 2, 1775, when Mr. O'Kelly became a Methodist lay preacher, to the Christmas Conference of 1784, at Baltimore, Maryland, nearly ten years, he was a layman, a member of the Episcopal Church, as it was commonly called. Then it was at this conference that Mr. O'Kelly ceased to be a layman, and a lay-preacher, and was ordained severally deacon, and elder by Rev. Thomas Coke, LL.D.*

We take the above to be correct, since Major York had in his possession, in 1876, the prayer-book presented to James O'Kelly when he was ordained to preach January 2, 1785. In this prayer-book, January 2, 1775, was given as the date when he began to preach, as a lay-preacher, from which it is evident that he had been preaching, in Virginia and North Carolina, a little more than three years before he was mentioned in the "Minutes" of the Methodist Conference at Leesburg, Virginia, in 1778.

One writer noticing this early work of James O'Kelly says: "The people flocked to hear him, and great was the work of God under his powerful exhortations and earnest prayers. The parish minister was greatly en-

* See a copy of this paper in Library of Elon College, N. C.

raged that an upstart Methodist preacher should have the temerity to preach in his chapel, and what was worse, that he should attract more people than the regular successor of the apostles. In spite of the curate's violent opposition he (O'Kelly) continued to preach in the chapel for more than a year with increasing success. The next year he joined "Asbury's Ironsides."*

From his first appearance in public, in Virginia, he showed more than ordinary ability, and soon took a high position in the ranks of Methodism.

Before proceeding further it seems well to take a bird's-eye view of conditions existing in the colony at this time, in order that we may the more fully understand some of the difficulties O'Kelly and his associates had to overcome in establishing Methodism on Virginia soil. The conditions are well portrayed in a letter written in 1774 by Hon. James Madison, who afterwards became president of the United States. Says he: "Poverty and luxury prevailed among all sects; pride, ignorance and knavery among the priesthood, and vice and wickedness among the laity. That is bad enough, but it is not the worst I have to tell you. That diabolical, hell-conceived principle of persecution rages among some, and to their eternal infamy, the clergy furnish their quota of imps for such purposes. There are at this time in the adjacent counties, not less than five or six well-meaning persons in close jail for publishing their religious sentiments, which, in the main are very orthodox." He further says: "I have neither pa-

* See McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature*, under "James O'Kelly"; also Bennett's *Memorials of Methodism in Virginia*.

tience to hear, talk nor think of anything relative to this matter, for I have squabbled, and scolded, abused and ridiculed so long about it to no purpose, that I am without common patience. So I must beg you to pity me and pray for the liberty of conscience to all.”*

Before this time the Virginia colony was an English province, and English customs, manners and laws were in force. The Episcopal or Established Church was the State Church, that is the Established Church was supported by the government, just as our public schools and almshouses are to-day. Every citizen had to pay a tithe, or church tax, and at times the attendance on the worship of the Established Church was compulsory.

Besides, people who did not believe as the Episcopalians did, were not allowed to preach their beliefs. As time went on there was more than one instance when people of this class, known as dissenters, were forced to leave the colony.

Under those conditions the ministry of the Established Church, both in England and Virginia, became very corrupt, and the masses began to long for a purer form of worship. The leaders in this movement in England were John and Charles Wesley, who, opposing the looseness in the Established Church with all their powers, were yet staunch Episcopalians, and only demanded a closer walk in the Christian life. John Wesley began to organize societies for the study of the Bible and the practice of experimental religion. In his societies it seems that those who attended often gave in their religious experience, and it was found that it not

*Bennett's *Memorials of Methodism in Virginia*.

only helped those who heard, but also those who told of their experiences. As is always the case when Christians begin to give their experience in public in the proper spirit, a great revival soon broke out in England, and it was not long before the spirit of the revival went over to Ireland. The Wesleys made several tours through England and Ireland. Their labors were greatly blest, and many people who were longing for a closer walk with God found their way from the United Kingdom to the American colonies, and especially to Virginia and North Carolina.

Mr. O'Kelly left us an account of the rise of Methodism in England and America. In the opening chapter of his *Apology* he gives the following:

“By the term Methodist, we distinguish a body of religious people, living by particular rule and order. Methodism is not the offspring of Episcopacy, but it justly claims the Holy Bible for its sacred root, for in the year 1729 two young men, by reading the Bible, saw that none could be saved without holiness. This Bible holiness they followed after, and in the strongest terms advised others so to do. And it came to pass after these days, even in the year 1766, two ministers of the Methodist order, viz: Embury and Strawbridge, emigrated from the land of kings, and settled in North America.

“They taught the people the fear of the Lord, and formed societies. Then came over Pilmoor and Boardman, and helped them. Then in the year 1771 John (Wesley) of England sent Francis (Asbury) also to America.

"The Lord of the harvest soon called forth a great company of preachers from the woods of Columbia; from their shops and farms. The Lord gave the word, and great was the company of the preachers. They ran to and fro, and knowledge increased.

"In those days the people of America groaned, by reason of oppression, they prayed the King of Britain to ease their burden, but the King consulted the young men, and refused to remove any of their burdens, but sent his army and shot the people of Columbia (America). The people revolted, and returned the flaming compliment. The King's people smote us hip and thigh, but the resolute Franks came over in ships, and helped us; then we prevailed."

Let us now take up the thread of Methodist history in Virginia and North Carolina. The first Methodist preacher to reach Virginia was Rev. Robert Williams, who landed in Norfolk early in the year 1772, and preached his first sermon from the old court-house door. This was only a short time after Rev. Francis Asbury had landed at Philadelphia, October 27, 1771. Rev. Richard Wright, who was appointed with Rev. Francis Asbury, at the Bristol (England) Conference to come to America in 1771, was stationed in Norfolk in 1773. In the fall of 1772 Williams and Rev. William Waters came together, and Waters wrote: "But, alas! we found very few in the course of our 300 mile journey who knew anything experimentally about the Lord Jesus Christ, or the power of His grace." So far as we know Mr. Williams was the first man to circulate Methodist tracts in Virginia. He printed and circulated John Wesley's sermons.

From this time the Wesleyan Societies in Virginia began to increase in numbers, and the ministry was steadily reinforced by young native itinerants. From the effects of these Methodist revivals many young men, whose hearts had been touched by the love of God, would enter the traveling connection. Mr. Wesley, however, never thought of establishing a new church either in England or America, but endeavored to purify the old form of worship. He lived and died an Episcopalian, and wished all the members of his societies in England, Ireland and America to do the same. And when the societies in America were organized as "The Methodist Episcopal Church" in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1784, it was without the direction of John Wesley. In fact Henry Moore says: "Mr. Wesley never gave his sanction to any of these things: nor was he the author of one line of all that Dr. Coke published in America on this subject."*

When Mr. O'Kelly began to preach, members of the societies regarded themselves as a part of the Established Church, seeking a higher religious life. In the year 1779, one year after James O'Kelly remained on trial in Virginia, there was not a Methodist preacher from Rev. Francis Asbury down who could administer the Holy Sacrament, celebrate the rites of matrimony, baptize a child, or perform the burial rites. These rites they were compelled to seek at the hands of the Episcopal clergy. But many of these were, indeed, men of loose principles and bad habits. In many

* See Moore's *Life of Wesley, American Edition*, Vol. I, page 279.

parishes the immorality of the ministers was notorious. Instead of being models of piety, they were examples of dissoluteness; instead of reverence, they received the ridicule of the people. When a body of men professing to be ministers of Christ, break from all restraints of gospel principles, and attend horse races, cock fights, fox hunts; when they drink wine to excess, sit up all night at card parties, and ridicule experimental religion as bigotry and superstition, can it be thought strange that a pious mind should revolt against such a class, and spurn them as spiritual guides, although they may have felt the pressure of prelatic hands, and stood in the link of a fancied succession? Dr. Hawks, in describing the conditions of the times, says: "As a body the clergy were anything but invulnerable." Drinking was one of the most common faults of the Episcopal clergy of the times, one instance being recorded where a clergyman was arrested for disturbing the public peace, and taken before a magistrate in the dead hours of the night, was fined and sent home. Another would go to his church and preach and then go to the home of one of his parishioners and drink so much brandy that he would have to be put in his gig and tied in and a servant sent along to lead his horse home.

Such were some of the conditions in Virginia and North Carolina when James O'Kelly began to preach, not to establish a new church, but to save souls from perdition. And further—

From the above it is seen that O'Kelly began to preach, not as a Methodist, as we now know that denomination, but as an Episcopalian, and a member of John

Wesley's societies, pleading for a purer and higher religious life than was generally taught from the Established pulpit. Preachers of this class usually met with much opposition, and as time went on the relations between the Established Church and the Wesleyan societies became more and more strained, and after the close of the Revolutionary War, all saw that it was only a question of time when the two would separate. As we have seen, Mr. O'Kelly was credited with having joined "Asbury's Ironsides" in 1778, and from that time we have a fairly good record of him, and his work, in the Methodist Conference of Virginia, until the year 1792, when he withdrew from the ranks of Methodism and began to organize the Christian Church.

CHAPTER III.

HIS WORK AS AN ITINERANT IN THE METHODIST SOCIETIES IN VIRGINIA—A RETROSPECTIVE VIEW OF METHODIST HISTORY IN AMERICA—THE LEESBURG AND FLUVANNA CONFERENCES.

We come now to O'Kelly's work as a Methodist lay preacher in Virginia, and in the border counties of North Carolina. As has been previously noted, he remained on trial at the Methodist Conference that met at Leesburg, Virginia, May 19, 1778, and became an assistant in that body. This was only six years after the first Methodist sermon had been delivered in the colony, and about seven years after Rev. Francis Asbury came over as a missionary to the societies in the American forests. All the English preachers, save Mr. Asbury, had returned to England, and he was in seclusion at Judge White's in Delaware, on account of the Revolutionary War. Rev. William Waters presided at this Leesburg Conference, he being the oldest native itinerant, and he it was, perhaps, who assigned Rev. James O'Kelly to his work. Fortunately, we have learned something of the nature of his work for that year. In the *Arminian Magazine*, Vol. 15, published in 1792, in London, a Mr. Allen (perhaps Rev. John Allen) has this to say in regard to O'Kelly's work in 1778: "In May, 1778, I began to preach the gospel. During the summer I preached only about home; but being earnestly pressed by the circuit preachers to travel, after many sore conflicts, I consented to ride in New Hope

Circuit in North Carolina, including my own place and some people in Wake County. During the winter we had considerable work in the circuit; Brother James O'Kelly traveled as my assistant, whose labors were greatly owned of God; numbers joined our societies, and many professed faith in the Redeemer."

In regard to the withdrawal of the English preachers when the war broke out, Mr. O'Kelly has this to say: "Those preachers who came over the salt water, some of whom conscientiously refused to qualify as American citizens, could not walk at large; therefore there appeared a kind of separation between the Northern preachers, and those in the South. And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring among the people and the Southern preachers, with respect to the ordinances: for the old church had corrupted herself."

If we glance at the events that had transpired in Methodist history just prior to this time we will find some of the causes that gave rise to the O'Kelly movement fourteen years later.*

As early as December, 1772, at a quarterly meeting in Harford County, Maryland, the sacramental question was discussed, and Mr. Asbury says: "Brother Strawbridge pleaded much for the ordinances, and so did the people, who appeared to be much biased by him. I told them I would not agree to it at that time, and insisted upon our abiding by the rules. But I was obliged to connive at some things for the sake of peace."

* For a full account of this, see Drinkhouse's *History of the Methodist Reform, and the Methodist Protestant Church*.

At the conference of 1773 the following resolution was passed: "No preacher in our connection shall be permitted to administer the ordinances at this time, except Mr. Strawbridge, and he under the particular direction of the assistant." Mr. Asbury had said in a discussion with Strawbridge and John King, when King proposed to put the matter of the ordinances to the people for them to decide, "I came to teach the people, and not to be taught by them."

Mr. Asbury was of a domineering spirit. At the Bristol conference some of the preachers objected to his appointment as missionary to America, and not a few of his acquaintances were struck with wonder when they heard that Mr. Wesley had appointed him. We can see the reason for this, for no sooner had he landed and commenced work than there began to be some friction between him and the native preachers, who stood with the people. At the conference of 1773, in which Mr. Asbury's spirit ruled, some rules were passed to avoid administering the ordinances, and also regarding attendance upon the Episcopal Church. The conference was held with closed doors, a thing not relished by liberty loving Americans. In the conference of 1777 the matter of administering the ordinances was again discussed, as it would not be *downed*, and the disposition to Presbyterianize the body grew apace.

At the time James O'Kelly entered the traveling connection the fires of opposition to the autocratic rule of Mr. Asbury, which had been smouldering for some time, had now been kindled. Mr. Asbury's rule for a layman to "pay, pray, and obey," never yet appealed to

the free citizens, in a free country. At the conference of 1778 the question as to whether the Methodist preachers were to be allowed to administer the ordinances—communion, baptism, marriage, and the burial of the dead—was once more postponed.

The conference of 1779 met at Brokenback Chapel, Fluvanna County, Virginia, May 18th, and James O'Kelly by the action of this conference was stationed on the New Hope Circuit.*

This conference marks a crisis in Methodist history.

At this time America had become an asylum for the oppressed, religiously as well as civilly. Many refugees were prominent in the colonies, while the native born felt the effects of free air and independent surroundings. Stephens says: "The hierarchy of Great Britain was to them a form of anti-Christ, and it was an integral part of its constitution." The people had received a military education through the two French and Indian wars, and were now in arms against the mother country, almost for an idea. They had been educated to self-government, and had reached a point where they could not and would not suffer any infringement of their civil rights, while in religion they spurned all trammels upon their conscience and freedom.

The Leesburg conference had adjourned with the understanding that the matter of the ordinances, and ordination of ministers should receive final disposition at this Fluvanna conference, and it was understood as

* Cf. "*Minutes of the Methodist Conferences Held in America*," copies in the library of Randolph-Macon College, Ashland, Virginia.

about settled that the figment of Episcopacy and servile dependence upon the clergy, of the now scattered and practically disestablished National Church of England on American soil, should be disowned. This temper of the preachers and the people Mr. Asbury knew well, and he used every means at his command to prevent this threatened annihilation of episcopacy in America. His main point of vantage was that, in opposing the plans of the Fluvanna preachers, he was in line with Mr. Wesley's purpose not to separate from the National Church, and he used this point with the hand of a master.

Of the Methodist preachers south of the Potomac River, a large majority were opposed to Mr. Asbury's plan, and were clamoring for an untrammelled church. Mr. Asbury saw the gathering storm, and so he called a private conference at Judge White's in Delaware, April 28th, 1779, in order that he might fortify himself in the esteem of the eleven Northern preachers, before coming South, as he knew Northern preachers were not in sympathy with the brethren in Virginia. On May 3, 1779, Mr. Asbury wrote a letter to Revs. John Dickens, Philip Gatch, Edward Dromgoole, and William Glendenning urging them, if possible, to prevent a separation among the preachers in the South, that is, in Virginia and North Carolina, and said that he entertained great hopes that the breach might be healed, for if it were not, the consequences would be bad. This shows the temper of the man; himself and eleven other preachers, meeting in conference, separating themselves from the main body, and then saying that the main body

of Methodists had separated from them; three-fifths of the members being south of the Potomac River.

In the "Minutes," for the year 1779, we find, in spite of Mr. Asbury's opposition, the following questions and answers: "What are the reasons for taking up the ordinances among us? Answer: Because the Episcopal Establishment is now dissolved, and therefore in almost all the circuits the members are without the ordinances, we believe it to be our duty. What preachers do approve of this step? Answer: Isham Tatum, Charles Hopkins, Nelson Reed, Reuben Ellis, Philip Gatch, Thomas Morris, James Morris, James Foster, John Major, Andrew Yergin, Henry Willis, Francis Poythress, John Sagmon, Leroy Cole, Carter Cole, James O'Kelly, William Moore, and Samuel Moore. A Presbytery was appointed consisting of Gatch, Foster, Cole, and Ellis, first to administer the ordinances themselves, second to authorize any other preacher or preachers approved by them, by the laying on of hands to administer the ordinances."

From the above it is seen that Rev. James O'Kelly was not the only one who saw that some reforms were necessary for the good of the cause, and when he voted to have the ordinances administered to the people by Methodist ministers he did not represent any faction in Virginia, but the majority, there being but one man who was bitterly opposed to it, and that was Rev. Francis Asbury.

A few incidents that happened at this conference need to be noticed, as bearing upon the future work of Mr. O'Kelly. The mode of baptism adopted at this meeting

was either sprinkling, or immersion, as the parent, or adult, might choose. Kneeling was thought to be the most appropriate attitude to take when the Lord's Supper was administered, though it was not compulsory, if any one had objection to that posture. It is more than likely that Mr. O'Kelly played an important part in these movements, for in later life he was a great believer in sprinkling. (In those days it was agreed, and Mr. O'Kelly helped to this agreement, as to what hour a preacher should rise. "All preachers were to make it a matter of conscience to rise at four or five in the morning, and it was declared a shame for a preacher to be in bed at six.")

Some of these measures were not liked by the Northern brethren, who were biased by Rev. Francis Asbury, and it is not unlikely that here is where they got a part of their grudge against James O'Kelly when he took the stand he did a few years later.

Mr. Asbury called a conference at Lovely Lane Chapel, Baltimore, Maryland, April 24, 1780. It was composed of fourteen preachers besides himself. In addition to other resolutions they passed the following: "Does this whole conference disapprove of the steps our brethren have taken in Virginia? Answer: Yes. Do we look upon them no longer as Methodists in connection with Mr. Wesley and us until they come back? Answer: Agreed. What must be the condition of our union with our Virginia brethren? Answer: To suspend all their administrations for one year, and all meet together in Baltimore." Again the few turn out the many.

These extracts are given to show that there were many prominent Methodists who saw the need of reform measures, and that James O'Kelly did not stand alone, but because of his ability and prominence became the champion of these measures.

The years just passed over were turbulent ones in his section, for the War of the Revolution was going on, and was soon to be transferred in large measure to the South. Touching his own experience at this period, Mr. O'Kelly says: "After the itinerant preachers fled from the South, for fear of danger, I labored and traveled from circuit to circuit, in North Carolina, to feed and comfort those poor distressed sheep, left in the wilderness. Philip, whose surname was Bruce, helped me—through great perils. We judged it best, for men in our business, to move as quietly as possible. I was taken prisoner by the Tories, and robbed; I was retaken before day, by Captain Peter Robertson, the great and noted Whig. I was afterward taken prisoner by the British. The chief officer urged me to subject myself to my king, and although I was in his hands I would not yield. He offered to release me if I would solemnly promise not to let any man know, asked or not asked, where the British lay. I refused to do that. Then I was despised, and very near famished for bread. At which time I resolved, through grace, to hold to my integrity till death. My honor, my oath—my soul were at stake; till at last, Providence offered me an opportunity, which I gladly embraced, and narrowly escaped their hands. After these things, I went (not as a prisoner) into General Rutherford's camps, and

there, by the testimony of two worthy gentlemen, viz: Colonel Robertson and Colonel Owens, of Bladen, did I establish my political and civil character. I stood my draft as other men. Once my substitute faithfully served a tour. Once I marched on foot as far as I was able. Which of my accusers have done more?"*

Major R. W. York, in the *Christian Sun*, in 1886, says: James O'Kelly was a Whig among Whigs. Rev. Francis Asbury had been forced into involuntary silence throughout the whole period of the war on account of his suspicion of Toryism."

Another incident that shows O'Kelly's patriotism at this time is given. Governor Swain in communicating to Rev. Dr. Caruthers an account of the Slingsby affair and published in Caruthers's *Old North State*, in 1776, speaks of Mr. O'Kelly as "the young Methodist preacher," and relates the following: "The anecdote of the Methodist preacher, which you wish me to relate, I had from the old gentleman's own lips. Mr. O'Kelly, then a young Methodist preacher, when traveling over the country and preaching, was taken at the house of a friend or an acquaintance, by a small party of Tories. His horse and saddle bags were taken from him, and he was tied to a peach tree. A party of Whigs coming up just at the time, a skirmish ensued; and although he was between the two fires, he was not hurt. Before this skirmish was ended, Colonel Slingsby came up with a larger party of men, and the Whigs were dispersed. Recognizing O'Kelly, the Colonel asked him to preach for them, which he did, and drawing up his men in good

* Chap. 22 of the *Apology*.

order he stood with his head uncovered, during the whole service. Mr. O'Kelly said, when relating this anecdote to me: 'Ah! child, your grandfather was a gentleman.' An old lady who was well acquainted with Mr. O'Kelly, tells me, that the man at whose house he was taken, was also taken, bound to the same tree, and killed in the skirmish. She had heard him relate the incident frequently—I only once." Mr. O'Kelly at the time of the Slingsby affair is mentioned as a young preacher, having been in the ministry only five or six years, but at this time he must have been over forty years old.

This is in striking contrast to the experiences of some of Mr. O'Kelly's brethren, for Dr. Bennett in his *Memorials of Methodism in Virginia*, says: "When the war was brought into Virginia many Methodists were whipped for refusing to bear arms." The spirit of liberty in O'Kelly was too strong for him to refuse the call of patriotism, and no such ignominious punishment as the whipping post could ever have been his portion for refusing to bear arms in behalf of freedom.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CONFERENCE AT MANAKINTOWN—MORE OF HIS SERVICE IN THE AMERICAN ARMY—THE CONFER- ENCE AT ELLIS'S PREACHING HOUSE.

The regular conference for Virginia met at Manakintown, on the "Historic James" River in Powhatan County, May 28, 1780; and James O'Kelly was assigned to the Tar River Circuit in North Carolina. At this conference the question of the union of the preachers, who had been estranged by the events recorded in the last chapter, was taken up. Mr. Asbury wanted union, but it must be without any compromise on his part. In order to unite, the action of the former conference had to be annulled, and the Virginia preachers were not willing to that. For a long time it seemed that there was to be no union. They talked, they prayed, and perhaps, wept. James O'Kelly was there, an active participant, and was not easily circumvented. Some years later, when his hot Irish blood was up, he characterized Mr. Asbury as a "long headed" Englishman, and so he was. About this time Mr. Asbury gave up hope of a reconciliation and was about to leave for the North, when he says: "They came to an agreement while I was praying." But he adds further: "All but one of the preachers agreed to the conditions of the union." This one was James O'Kelly, who returned home an unreconciled dissenter. At this time he was next in influence to Mr. Asbury and Waters, and was by far the most influential preacher of the Methodist

connection in his section. Read the story of the Fluvanna and Manakintown conferences in his own words:

"The Southern preachers had a meeting on the occasion in the county of Fluvannah, about the year 1779, and after we were come together to consider the matter, and there had been much disputing, John, whose surname was Dickens, made appear from Scripture, that a Presbytery, and not Episcopacy, was the divine order. Then it pleased the conference to form a Presbytery, and ordain elders. We went out in the name of the Lord, and the pleasure of the Lord prospered in our hands.

"Tidings of this soon reached the Northern preachers, and Francis (Asbury) wrote that we should meet in conference at the Manakintown, to consider the matter more minutely. We met accordingly; Francis (Asbury) from the North, and John (Dickens) from the South, were chief speakers. Francis raised his arguments from an author, (Wesley), who advised the Methodists never to leave the Established Church. But John drew his arguments from the New Testament, proving thereby that the true church was not of the Episcopal order. Conference broke, and a separation was the result. I consulted my brother John, who was a man of wisdom and patience, that we should make an attempt at negotiation. We proposed that Francis should lay our grievances before (John) Wesley, and that there should be a suspension of the ordinances until we could receive counsel from him. On these terms we united.

"The heavy struggle between Britain and the men of Columbia (America) being not at an end, John (Wes-

ley) of England, suspended his answer till the blessed epoch, or time of peace."

On Saturday, July 8, 1780, at Cypress Chapel, in Nansemond County, Virginia, Rev. James O'Kelly and Mr. Asbury met for the first time for a personal interview. Mr. O'Kelly made a fine impression on Mr. Asbury, who wrote in his "Journal": "He, (James O'Kelly) appeared to be a warm-hearted and good man. James O'Kelly and myself enjoyed and comforted each other. This dear man of God arose at midnight, and prayed very devoutly for me and himself." Mr. O'Kelly seems to have met Mr. Asbury at this point for the purpose of taking him on a visit through his circuit, and on the following day Mr. O'Kelly preached at Green Hills, a place somewhere within a day's journey from Cypress Chapel. His text on this occasion was: "Have ye understood all these things?" Mr. Asbury says: "He raised high and was very affecting, but to little purpose: He was troubled with the people about these times."

For the year 1781 we have no record of his work, in the Methodist histories, but we find that a part of that year's work was recorded in the archives of his country. He says in vindication of his patriotism, that he was a private in the Revolutionary War, was taken prisoner, and resisted bribery, as a bait to disclose information against his country; he marched on foot and was honorably discharged at the close of the war.*

Maj. R. W. York, in the *Christian Sun* of January

* Drinkhouse's *History of the Methodist Reform, and the Methodist Protestant Church*, Vol. 1, p. 454.

7, 1886, says: "He (James O'Kelly) had been in the active ministry during the entire war, and had served as a soldier through two campaigns, besides rendering other independent and hazardous service to the cause."

All this is in striking contrast with the conduct of Mr. Asbury and many others, who either had to return to England, when the war came on, or go into hiding.

The conference for 1782 met at Ellis's preaching House in Sussex County, Virginia, April 17th, and Mr. O'Kelly was stationed for the ensuing year in Mecklenburg County, Virginia, with Thomas S. Chew as a helper. The same day conference met, Mr. Asbury had a conference with James O'Kelly and Philip Bruce. Mr. O'Kelly having just returned from his service in the army, was without a regular appointment, and Mr. Asbury says: "I obtained the promise of Brothers Bruce and O'Kelly to join heartily in our connection." This we need not regard as a change in his opinions in regard to church government, but as a truce for the sake of peace. A paper was prepared at this conference by Mr. Asbury for the preachers to sign, binding themselves to adhere to the "old plan" of Wesley. Most of the preachers present signed this instrument without hesitation, but there was one exception, James O'Kelly. Rev. Devereux Jarratt, who lived in the county of Sussex, administered the communion, he being an Episcopalian.

Rev. John Dickens, by being placed at the head of the Methodist Book Concern, in a very short time became a lifelong friend, and an ardent supporter of Mr. As-

bury's form of church government. His cooperation was secured by promotion, but this would not work with Mr. O'Kelly. There was too much iron in his blood, and he could not be prevailed upon to sign away his convictions, and Mr. Asbury was too politic to attempt to crush him at this time. From the trend of the foregoing we see that Mr. Asbury had championed the Wesleyan plan with all the vigor possible, and that James O'Kelly had championed the cause of free church government in America. From this time on we shall see how the influence of one, and then of the other, would rise and wane.

The Virginia Conference for 1783 met at Ellis's Preaching House on the 7th of May, and Mr. O'Kelly was appointed by this conference as an assistant, and stationed at Brunswick.

The Virginia Conference for 1784, met on April 30th at the same place as the year before, and was in session for two days. Mr. Asbury says: "Brother O'Kelly gave us a good sermon, and Jarratt gave us a good discourse; our business was conducted with uncommon love and unity." In this sketch we are giving an account of the conferences that James O'Kelly attended, and take little notice of those held in Baltimore, as what was done there was according to the will of Mr. Asbury who regarded this point as his strong forte.

The "Minutes" for that year say that, at this meeting, provision was made for James O'Kelly's wife, a long neglected duty of the conference toward O'Kelly, for he was married years before he began preaching and had been in the connection then about six years.

The same custom prevailed then as now in the Methodist Episcopal Church government, namely; that a married man was shown more consideration than a single one.

Thus far O'Kelly has been a regular Methodist itinerant, but did his work so well that his worth was recognized, as we shall see, at the next Baltimore Conference. As a leader, at this time, he was regarded a close second to Mr. Asbury.

CHAPTER V.

THE CHRISTMAS CONFERENCE OF 1784 CALLED— WHAT WAS DONE, AND WHAT FOLLOWED—CONCLU- SIONS OF HISTORIANS.

In the second chapter of his *Apology*, Mr. O'Kelly tells how the "Christmas Conference" of 1784, was called:

"John, whose surname was Wesley, sent printed circular letters to the preachers in America, in answer to our former request. The following is a copy of the letter:

BRISTOL, September 10, 1784.

To Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our Brethren in North America:

1. By a very uncommon train of providences, many of the provinces of North America are totally disjoined from the British empire, and erected into independent States. The English Government has no authority over them, either civil or ecclesiastical, any more than over the States of Holland. A civil authority is exercised over them partly by the Congress, partly by the State Assemblies; but no one either exercises or claims any ecclesiastical authority at all. In this peculiar situation some thousands of the inhabitants of these States desire my advice, and in compliance with their desire, I have drawn up a little sketch.

2. Lord King's account of the primitive church convinced me many years ago, that bishops and presbyters

are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain. For many years I have been importuned from time to time, to exercise this right, by ordaining part of our traveling preachers. But I have still refused not only for peace's sake, but because I was determined as little as possible to violate the established order of the national church to which I belonged.

3. But the case is widely different between England and North America. Here there are bishops who have a legal jurisdiction. In America there are none, and but few parish ministers. So that for some hundred miles together there are none either to baptize or administer the Lord's Supper. Here therefore my scruples are at an end; and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order and invade no man's right, by appointing and sending laborers into the harvest.

4. I have accordingly appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury to be joint superintendents over our brethren in North America. As also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey, to act as elders among them, by baptizing and administering the Lord's Supper. And I have prepared a liturgy, little differing from that of the Church of England (I think the best constituted national church in the world), which I advise all the traveling preachers to use on the Lord's Day in all the congregations, reading the litany only on Wednesdays and Fridays, and praying *ex tempore* on all other days. I also advise the elders to administer the supper of the Lord on every Lord's Day.

If any one will point out a more rational and Scriptural way of feeding and guiding those poor sheep in

the wilderness, I will gladly embrace it. At present, I can not see any better method than that I have taken.

It has indeed been proposed to desire the English bishops to ordain part of our preachers for America. But to this I object. (1) I desired the Bishop of London to ordain only one, but could not prevail. (2) If they consented, we know the slowness of their proceedings, but the matter admits of no delay. (3) If they would ordain them now, they would likewise expect to govern them. And how grievously would this entangle us? (4) As our American brethren are now totally disentangled both from the State and from the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again either with one or the other. They are now at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive church. And we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free.

(Signed) JOHN WESLEY.

Continuing, in the third chapter of his *Apology*, Mr. O'Kelly says: "And it came to pass in the year of our Lord, 1784, in the twelfth month, (on the twenty-fourth day at 10 a. m.) the traveling preachers were called together to the great city of Baltimore, to consider the contents of the circular letter. We perceived the counsel given in the circular letter to be good; because we were directed to follow the Scriptures and the primitive church; and to stand fast in our liberties, seeing we were free from the power of kings and bishops. Amen."

The representative Methodists of America were there, amongst whom were James O'Kelly, and many of the

Virginia brethren. This conference marks another period in the life of our subject, and for this reason should be given more than casual notice. To do this we shall have to go back over some of the events that had recently transpired in this country, and in England.

The Revolutionary War had been over for three years. The church and the state could no longer be united. The time honored plan of Wesley in England could no longer be carried out in a free country, where there was no Established Church. The Methodist societies had arrived at the place where it was necessary for them to adopt some stable form of government. John Wesley recognized this, and employed all the ingenuity of his great mind in working out a plan of government for his societies in America. All saw that it was necessary to have some means by which the ordinances might be administered, for at this time there were thousands of their children unbaptized, and the members in general had not partaken of the Lord's Supper for many years. These conditions brought about restlessness among the people, because there was not a preacher from Mr. Asbury down who could administer these ordinances.

Mr. Wesley informed Dr. Coke of his design of drawing up a plan of church government. The nature of this plan has never been known, as Dr. Coke is supposed to have suppressed it when he reached America.*

On this side of the Atlantic Mr. Francis Asbury saw the possibility of organizing a new church with himself as its head and founder. This was the goal for which

* Drinkhouse's *History of the Methodist Reform, and the Methodist Protestant Church*, Vol. 1, pages 295-6.

he strove. Dr. Thomas Coke was to come to America to set Mr. Asbury apart, and to try, if possible, to be at the head of the church system himself. James O'Kelly, the champion of religious freedom, stood ready to expose anything that he thought was against the liberty of conscience. The plan of church government was drawn up, and at the conference at Leeds, England, on July 25, 1784, Mr. Wesley announced his intention of sending Revs. (afterwards Bishops) Thomas Coke, Thomas Vasey, and Richard Whatcoat as his ambassadors to America. They set sail from Bristol, September 18, 1784, with their credentials from John Wesley, and the little sketch for the government of the church. In six weeks they reached America.

They soon met Mr. Asbury at Barrett's Chapel in the State of Delaware, and there they made themselves known to each other. After the services at the chapel they had an interview at a private house in which they discussed the church situation in America. A council of all the preachers who could be got together was called, and they agreed to call a "General Conference." It was only forty days until Christmas eve, and there was much work to be done in notifying the preachers, as there were scarcely any mail facilities. Rev. Freeborn Garrettson was sent out from north to south to notify, and to send word to those preachers off the route, that the "General Conference" would meet on Christmas eve in Baltimore. (There were in all eighty-three preachers.)

The Conference convened at Lovely Lane Chapel, and Dr. Coke, Messrs. Asbury, Whatcoat, Vasey and sixty other preachers were present. The meetings were held

behind closed doors. Dr. Thomas Coke presided, as Wesley's appointed superintendent. After devotional exercises he produced a letter from Wesley which among other things, said: "They (the American Methodists) are now at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive church."

At this meeting the societies were organized into the form of a church in the proper sense of the word. We will see what Mr. O'Kelly who was present says:

"The conference unanimously agreed to separate from the Church of England; and, therefore, we formed our religious societies into an independent church. The title was 'The Methodist Episcopal Church.' The term Episcopacy did not set well on the minds of some, seeing Mr. Wesley assured us that it was not apostolic. But Thomas (Coke) explained it away, by the indefinite term, Methodist Episcopacy,—we had Episcopacy, but no bishop. Episcopacy, and the succession of bishops from the apostles, were proved erroneous by these superintendents, in the following manner: 'the succession of bishops from the Apostles can be proved neither from Scripture, nor antiquity; bishop, elder, and overseer are synonymous terms throughout the writings of Saint Paul.' Are not these things written in the sermon delivered by Thomas (Coke) on the ordination of Francis (Asbury)? Yea, in the book of discipline for the year 1784.

"In the same book the origin of Methodist ordination is recorded in the following manner: 'Our ordination is equal to that of Presbyterians, originating in three presbyters of the Church of England.' The conference

unanimously agreed to submit to John (Wesley) of England in matters of Church Government; but we (O'Kelly and his followers) did not."

Rev. Francis Asbury and Dr. Thomas Coke were elected superintendents of the Methodist Episcopal Church of America. We will again let Mr. O'Kelly tell how it was done: "Thomas and Francis (Coke and Asbury) were our superintendents as President Elders according to John (Wesley's) appointment, but they were not elected by the suffrage of conference, although it is so written in the book of discipline." From this quotation we get an idea of Mr. O'Kelly's views on church government, and we see that he was a firm believer in a republican form, instead of an Episcopal form of church government. This matter of voting was one of the things most dreaded by Mr. Wesley, and he never allowed it. Mr. Asbury did not like it, but James O'Kelly was a firm believer in it. In fact, in 1787 Mr. Wesley advised Dr. Coke to put as few things as possible to vote. Said he: "If you (Dr. Coke,) Brother Asbury and Brother Whatcoat are agreed, it is sufficient."

At this meeting Mr. Asbury was ordained one day a Deacon, the next an Elder, and the third Superintendent by Dr. Coke, assisted by Revs. Richard Whatcoat, Thomas Vasey, and P. W. Otterbein, a minister of the German Church—"The holy, the good Otterbein," as he was called.

On Sunday, January 2, 1785, Rev. James O'Kelly and twelve others of the oldest and most experienced ministers were ordained to the office of Elder in the

Methodist Episcopal Church of America. The ordaining presbytery consisted of the same persons who ordained Mr. Asbury a few days before, except that Mr. Asbury assisted at this ordination. Then and there Mr. O'Kelly ceased to be a member of the Church of England, ceased to be a Methodist lay-preacher, which he had been since January 2, 1775, and became henceforth an Elder in the Methodist Episcopal Church of America.*

In the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church of 1784 there were many dissenters, but they could only oppose under the circumstances, and so a church was organized of *ministers*, by *ministers*, and for *ministers*, with Rev. Francis Asbury at its head in truth if not in form. Freeborn Garrettson, in the North, and James O'Kelly in the South, with a respectable minority, were not satisfied with the form of government adopted.†

Dr. Coke afterwards confessed "our societies would have been a regular Presbyterian Church, but for the steps taken by Mr. Wesley and myself." Thus is shown the strength of the minority.‡

The early Christian writers tell us that Mr. O'Kelly most vigorously opposed the Episcopizing of the Methodist Societies of America at this conference, but his efforts were of no avail. When his preferences failed he did not lose hope, however, and begin to despair, for he

* See Maj. R. W. York's sketch in *The Christian Sun* of 1886.

† Drinkhouse's *History of the Methodist Reform and the Methodist Protestant Church*, Vol. 1, pp. 287-8.

‡ Drinkhouse's *History of the Methodist Reform and the Methodist Protestant Church*, Vol. 1, p. 301.

believed that there was yet hope for a free church, and so he continued in the work, believing that he, and those who thought as he did, would be able, in some way or other, to so modify the despotic authority of the Bishop that the subordinate preachers might have some rights which they might call their own, and yet be members of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Let us, for a few moments, examine more closely the form of government adopted at this "Christmas Conference," for upon the issues of this hinge the later attitude and work of James O'Kelly. There has never been but one thing more efficiently and thoroughly centralized as a human polity: the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. They departed from the New Testament principles—the equality of the brethren, the parity of the ministry—and a hierarchy was inevitable. The lay-members were to pray, pay and obey. The class leader was a sub-pastor, and an appointee of the circuit elder; the exhorter and the local preacher were in the next circle, dependent also for renewal of license upon the quarterly conference, all of whom were also dependent upon the circuit elder. The deacon was to serve the elder, and copied him, the elder was obedient to the presiding elder, for on him his appointment depended as he represented him to the bishop; the presiding elder was selected by the bishop and held office at his will and pleasure, so that virtually every official from the highest to the lowest was an appointee of the bishop. The reader can readily see that this form of government was likely to have some opposition, for the idea of religious liberty will naturally grow with the idea of political

liberty, and at this very time America was filled with the idea of full political liberty. (Mr. O'Kelly was a Whig among Whigs. Mr. Francis Asbury, as we have seen, had been forced into involuntary silence throughout the entire war on account of his being suspected of Toryism. We may judge from this that these two eminent divines differed as widely as Whig and Tory on matters of government, and but for the abundance of religion in the heart would have been as bitter enemies as other Whigs and Tories.)

After this meeting the Superintendents and Elders adopted the use of gowns, and frequently appeared before the people in full canonical dress. This had the English tinge, and, we may be sure, was not relished by the people.*

As the custom was not relished by the people it was soon abandoned. From this year we may date the office of Presiding Elder, though it was not planned for at this meeting, and the name does not appear in an official way in the "Minutes" until the year 1789.

When the preachers returned home from the Christmas Conference, James O'Kelly in his chosen field of North Carolina and Virginia, began to discuss the situation, and to strengthen his position for a tussle with Rev. Francis Asbury, and if possible to get the people to return to the Presbyterian form of church government, instead of clinging to the Episcopal form. In his section he wielded a great influence with his quick wit, strong understanding, and fervid piety. He was also

* See Rev. J. B. Dunn's *History of Nansemond County, Virginia*, in regard to the expulsion of Parson Agnew from his church by the Vestrymen.

independent, self-willed, and, as a presiding elder, made himself felt and feared by his subordinates.

We now see that the contention of Dr. E. J. Drinkhouse in his *History of The Methodist Reform and The Methodist Protestant Church*, concerning the Asburyan system of church government, is correct. His contention is "that the system of Mr. Asbury was false to manhood in its natural and inalienable rights; false to New Testament precedents and the apostolic church; false to the equality of the brotherhood, and that priesthood of the people inculcated by the direct precepts and positive implications of the Christian's only Master,—the Lord Jesus Christ."

CHAPTER VI.

O'KELLY'S WORK AS ELDER, THEN AS PRESIDING ELDER IN VIRGINIA AND NORTH CAROLINA—THE COUNCIL—INCIDENTS LEADING UP TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1792.

In the year 1785 James O'Kelly was an elder with preachers in his charge, his district being composed of Amelia, Bedford and Orange. It is supposed that he received his appointment from the Christmas Conference.

In the year 1786 the Virginia Conference met at Lane's Chapel, in Sussex County, Virginia, April 10, and Mr. O'Kelly's district was composed of Guilford, Halifax and Mecklenburg. (This year Revs. James Haw and Benjamin Ogden were sent to Kentucky as missionaries, but when Mr. O'Kelly withdrew from the Methodists in 1792 they joined him.)

It was during this year that a Sunday school was established by Mr. Asbury at the house of Thomas Crenshaw, in Hanover County, Virginia. This was the first in the New World, and we may believe that Mr. O'Kelly had something to do with preparing the people for this institution, since he had been laboring in this section for some time, and was so well and favorably known. Among the number that attended this school was one colored youth who was converted, and afterwards became a preacher among the blacks.

In 1787 the Virginia Conference met at William White's near Rough Creek, in Charlotte County, Virginia, April 19th, and James O'Kelly, as presiding

elder had charge of Bladen, New River, Tar River, Roanoke, (old spelling Roan Oak), Mecklenburg, Brunswick, Sussex, and Amelia. This year a conference similar to the one of 1784 was called, by Dr. Coke, to meet in Baltimore, Maryland, May 1st. One of the main matters to come before this meeting was the ordination of Rev. Richard Whatcoat to the office of Superintendent. Mr. O'Kelly, in his *Apology*, says that "the matter was opened at the Rough Creek Conference in Virginia, and that he opposed the ordination of Mr. Whatcoat." Continuing, he says: "The chief speakers on the subject were Thomas (Coke) and James (O'Kelly). Francis (Asbury) was opposed to a joint superintendent, yet said but little, for he was a man under authority. Although Thomas (Coke) seemed to be somewhat in conference, it maketh no matter to me, God accepteth no man's person. I spake after this manner; that the free people of America were exceedingly jealous of the growing body of Methodists, because of the European heads. Moreover, I did not consider the person (Rev. Richard Whatcoat) adequate to the task on account of his age, and that also he was a stranger to the wilderness of America, etc. But above all I urged that two heads would produce two bodies. Francis (Asbury) proposed for the Baltimore Conference to decide the dispute, to which we all agreed, and there the motion was lost.

"How cruel, and how false is the prevailing report of my leaving the Episcopal Methodists because I could not obtain the place of a bishop. I deny the charge in the presence of the Lord, and in the face of the world.

“And it came to pass about the year 1787, Francis directed the preachers that whenever they wrote to him, to title him Bishop. They did so, and that was the beginning of our spurious Episcopacy.” Rev. John Wesley, in writing to Mr. Asbury, says: “How can you, how dare you suffer yourself to be called a bishop? I shudder, I start, at the very thought. Men may call me a knave, or a fool, a rascal, a scoundrel, and I am content; but they shall never, by my consent, call me a bishop. For my sake, for God’s sake, put a full end to this.”*

In 1788 at the conference held at Petersburg, Virginia, June 17th, O’Kelly’s district was composed of Anson, Bertie, Camden, Portsmouth, Sussex, Brunswick, Amelia, Buckingham, Bedford, Amherst, Orange, Hanover, and Williamsburg. During the last mentioned year Virginia was swept by one of the greatest revivals of religion that was ever known. Mr. O’Kelly has this to say about it: “The pleasure of the Lord still prospered in our hands, most gloriously, indeed. We lengthened our cords but our stakes gave way. These were glorious times for gaining proselytes to God, but the people thus converted, did not prosper, because they were deprived of liberty; being influenced too much by the fear of man.”

Another writer in noticing this revival, says: “Such a time for the awakening of sinners was never seen before among the Methodists of America. The work was most powerful in the southern counties of Virginia. It

* *Life of Wesley*, Vol. 11, pp. 285-6, quoted by Dr. Drinkhouse, Vol. 1, p. 350, of his *History of the Methodist Reform and the Methodist Protestant Church*.

broke out about midsummer and continued through the year. The whole country between the Roanoke and the James rivers, and from the mountains to the sea, was swept by the flame of the revival. The strong men in the field were Bruce, O'Kelly, Ogburn, Cox, Easter, and Hull; each a tower of strength. They were men of great powers of endurance, mighty in prayer, full of the Holy Ghost." This is given to show that James O'Kelly was a man of great magnetism and power and was so recognized by his co-laborers at that time.

It is said that he was a man much given to prayer, and that he would often rise at midnight and pour out his soul to God in prayer, using these words: "Give me children, or I die," referring to converts. At this time converts were looked for at every service, and the preachers prayed and preached to this end. (Why was it ever *stopped*?)

Mr. O'Kelly gives us a glimpse of these times in the following words: "And it was so that in those days we knew but little of government; we depended on the goodness and wisdom of the bishop. It hath been said by some, that it would have been well if we had remained ignorant on the subject of church government. Yet I must believe that knowledge is better than ignorance, and light better than darkness.

"In those days the districts were formed in a kind of confederacy, and the bishop was amenable to the districts respecting his conduct. This plan was directed by John (Wesley) of England, I believe."

The Virginia Conference for 1789 met at Petersburg, Virginia, April 28th, and Mr. O'Kelly's district con-

sisted of Amelia, Mecklenburg, Bedford, Orange, Hanover, Williamsburg, Halifax, Cumberland, Brunswick, Greenville, Bertie, Camden, Portsmouth and Sussex. In this year the meeting known in history as the "Council" convened for the first time.

The necessities of the church gave rise to this meeting. It was not convenient for all the preachers to attend one meeting, and as they were then holding many small conferences there seemed to be danger of Methodism falling to pieces unless some central power could be brought about to hold it together. So after mature deliberation the bishops recommended the establishment of a *so-called* representative body, to be composed of the wisest and best men of the church to meet at stated periods for the formation of all needful rules and regulations for the government of the church in its various departments. The meeting was not liked by Mr. O'Kelly, and he has this to say about it:

"Francis (Asbury) informed us of an uncommon and glorious union among the traveling preachers, so that the Millenium was approaching, or fast coming on. Then he proposed that a general conference plan should be established, where all might assemble together at one place.

"This led us straightway into disputations. We raised several objections against his purpose, and our thoughts on such a plan of government were approved of through the districts—the motion was lost, and our objections published. And thus it is written in the minutes for the year 1789, page 12: "Whereas, the holding of general conferences on this extensive continent would

be attended with a variety of difficulties, and inconveniences to the work of God—loss of time, expense,' etc.

"Let it be remembered in the annals of church history, that the very plan of government which was condemned, and exploded through the connection, is now unanimously received and established by the same men. Nevertheless, these men peal wisdom and weight of the majority; although they have turned as the weathercock. Be it known, that at the same time the general conference plan was proposed, Francis proposed a council plan also, where a few elders might meet with their bishop, and do the business.

"I then arose, when the council was proposed, and spake after this manner: We would wish the matter to be further explained to us; that is to say, what will be the business of such a council, what power shall it be invested with, and what benefits may we expect to receive from its operation?

"Francis spake and said: 'There must be something to preserve the union.' 'However,' said he, 'the council shall only mature matters for the districts, and form no resolution without unanimity; and after forming such resolutions, they shall be binding on no district, unless the majority of the preachers in the district agree to them.'

"The conference gave their voice in favor of the council, and ordered that the following resolution be printed: 'No resolution in council without unanimity, and no resolution shall be binding on any district, unless a majority of the preachers agree to it.' See Minutes for the year 1789, page 12."

The council was to be composed of the bishops and the presiding elders; the presiding elders were appointed, changed, and put out of office by the bishop, and just when he pleased; of course the whole of the council was to consist of the bishops, and a few other men of their own choice and appointing. The bishop was in supreme control.

They met December 1, 1789, at Baltimore, Maryland, and the following were in attendance: Francis Asbury, Bishop; Richard Ivey, Georgia; Reuben Ellis, South Carolina; Philip Bruce, North District of Virginia; James O'Kelly, South District of Virginia; Lemuel Green, Ohio; Nelson Reed, Western Shore, Maryland; Joseph Everett, Eastern Shore, Maryland; John Dickens, Pennsylvania; J. O. Cromwell, New Jersey; Freeborn Garrettson, New York.

Mr. O'Kelly was a prominent member of this body and when the plan of choosing members was announced he saw that it did not agree with what he believed to be the New Testament plan and finally, when the deliberations were at an end, he saw that it would not fill the mission that was intended for it, and he became one of the bitter opponents of the "Council" and used his influence among the young preachers in his district, and the consequence was that the "Council" and its workings were summarily turned out of doors in his district.

When he would have no more to do with the "Council," but used his influence against it, the first open coldness between Bishop Asbury and himself began to be seen. As to what was done at this meeting we will let Mr. O'Kelly tell for himself: "Francis refused two

worthy ministers a seat in the 'Council,' in his absolute manner without rendering any reason for such conduct. We proceeded to business, but what I know not, for all was premeditated, and deposited in the one mind. The political project was carried on in the following manner: Francis would propose a few sentences at a time. The intention of the man I knew not, therefore, the thing being hid, the interpretation was too hard for me. I moved on in the dark, and groped as a blind man. For no one knew the mind of the man, save his spirit within him. The judicious reader will wonder at our stupid conduct, thus to be duped, not to demand the intention to be explained, previous to our entering into business."

He says of the plan: "I confess that on one side it discovers weakness, and on the other hand policy. But as we were men under authority, we feared to offend our superior. He often prayed that God would deliver the preachers from the curse of suspicion. This prayer had the desired effect on some of us. Francis proposed that no preaching house should be built for the time to come, by the people, without first obtaining liberty of the conference. I cogently opposed the motion, because I loved the people, and conceived it to be an invasion of their civil as well as their religious liberties. I contended on till I discovered Francis to be much displeased, and he answered and said unto me; 'I can stay in *Baltimore* as long as you, and if I do not carry this, I will never sit in another council.'

"However, I obtained a small amendment, and so gave over contending, and the business went on. In

the evening I unbosomed myself to my brother, Philip Bruce; but from what I afterwards heard I found that Solomon's bird had carried the news to the great man. However, I told Francis that instead of councilors, we were his tools, and that I disliked to be a tool for any man. The business was finished, and the whole collected, and I supposed prepared and sent to the press. I saw them no more until the resolves came out in print."

On the way home he and Rev. Edward Morris made a critical examination of the plan, and he says:

"In observing the contents, we discovered a new constitution of a most despotic nature. Nine men could act as the legislature, for the bishop had the negative on the council for time to come. Edward signified to me that he would not travel under such a government, and went straightway and married a virtuous damsel, and located himself as others have since done."

"When I had informed the Virginia preachers of what was done they were sorely displeased with our conduct. I assured them that they had yet power to reject it when it came to the vote in our district; because we had a law, and by that law nothing done in council could bind any district without the majority of the preachers agreed to it.

"The cogitations of my head troubled me, and for a season sleep departed from me. I found myself deceived, and the church imposed upon, because the people and the preachers were not even consulted on the business. I wrote to Francis, after this manner: 'Brother, you know our infant state, grant us one year to consider

the matter coming before us. Or if you refuse this, take away your negative; and if you refuse I shall as a *duty* I owe to the church use mine influence, etc.' Francis received my letter by the hand of the messenger, but he utterly refused to comply with my request.

"He answered me after this manner: 'Thy letter greatly alarmed me; but pray who boldly demands my negative? My negative is my own, I never have received such a check from any preacher in America, etc.' I now began to discover the rapid five years growth of 'a moderate Episcopacy.' Whereunto shall I liken it? It is like unto a dwarf, whose head grows too fast for its body."

The next year Mr. Asbury modified the plan and carried it with him to the conferences for approval. It seems that the first one met in Charleston and here the new plan of government was offered, and it was rejected by the people. Then he (as is said with the name of conference) ventures to alter what the Council had done. Here Mr. O'Kelly remarks: "By what authority did Francis (and a petty conference) alter, amend, extend, or abridge the resolves of an ecclesiastical congress? And it was so, that in South Carolina, the new form of government was received, with those illegal alterations. In North Carolina, there were heavy debates in conference respecting the new constitution, and they refused to adopt it, even with the amendments. Then Francis proposed another constitution, (though the same nearly in substance) which he himself had formed. This he called my 'Mature Thoughts.' The same was adopted in North Carolina. The reader will

no longer be at a loss to find out the *cause* of our *ragged* separation, when he beholds how the different districts adopted different constitutions."

The Virginia Conference for the year 1790 met at Petersburg, Virginia, June 14th, and Mr. O'Kelly presided over Amelia, Brunswick, Greenville, Sussex, Bertie, Camden, Portsmouth, and Surry. Again let Mr. O'Kelly tell what was done:

"Francis (Asbury) came according to appointment to our conference at Petersburg. He was met with a warm reception, and after asking each other of our welfare, he declared unto us what he had done in the South; how the plan had been altered, and in what manner the preachers (not the church) had received it. He then presented us with a copy of his 'Mature Thoughts.' I easily discovered that in every alteration, he took care to secure his power.

"After some time elapsed in conference, Francis addressed us in the following manner: 'Tomorrow I shall lay before you the new form of government; and you may receive it as formed in Council, or with the Charleston amendments, or receive my 'Mature Thoughts'; offer your amendments, or reject it altogether.'

"In the evening the preachers desired my advice on the matter which was to be laid before them on the morrow. I assured them after this manner: 'Brethren, you know my mind on the subject, and my sorrows have I not hid from you. I judge it best that you assemble yourselves together this night, and consider the subject among yourselves, with prayer; but I will not be with

you. Consider it as the cause of your God, and divest yourselves of the fear of man, give your voice in the fear of God, to the best of your judgment.'

"And it was so, they followed my counsel, and we all met the next morning before the president, in the number about twenty-one, if I remember right. The president proposed it as above observed, and we all (except two) with one voice rejected it altogether. Then answered Francis (Asbury) and said, 'Ye have all spoken out of one mouth. Henceforth ye are all out of the union.' Then as one in distress, he gathered up his papers; so ended conference, without prayer! Thus it was the thing that I feared came upon me, for the union was broken and not preserved.

"The young ministers wept. I was struck with astonishment to find that we were all expelled from the union, by the *arbitrary voice of one man*; for no offense, but voting according to our own *mature judgment*. We could have appealed to the people of our care, and produced our *godly* characters, but ah! no, the people have no power to help themselves! Now I began to see!

"Had we appealed to England, Wesley himself was cut off before. Truly distressing! Cast out of union, charged with rebellion, etc., by one *arbitrary* man!

"We then desired *Francis* to suffer a convention to meet on the occasion, of only two from a district, and not to cast us off without a hearing. He refused. It was then proposed that I should be allowed to attend the Northern conferences, and give my light on the subject of government, and our proceedings, etc., for we had allowed elders from far to speak in our conferences;

who were friends to the new constitution. But Francis would not agree that we should have the like privilege. The interpretation is this: nineteen ministers, I believe, called and approved of by God, and *beloved*, by the people, were *expelled* from the union of the church, containing sixty or seventy thousand souls, by the voice of Francis (Asbury)!

“Should it be said that our expulsion was a natural consequence, or result of our rejecting the government which others had adopted; I would observe that only a minority had received it at the time. Is the like of this to be found in the annals of history? Then spake the young ministers unto Francis, before his departure, saying, ‘What shall we do, and what will become of this district?’ He answered them after this manner: ‘If you will agree that I shall be your bishop, I will station you in this district on the old plan. They accepted the offer, and the district was committed to their care; but no regard was paid to *O’Kelly*. This is the interpretation: As they agreed that he was their bishop, they thereby subjected themselves. And secondly, as they were put in care of every circuit, this shut me out, and as touching the old plan, this could soon be altered again.’”

However, Mr. O’Kelly was finally recognized as presiding elder, and the preachers of his district named as usual. When Mr. Asbury was gone on his way to the other conferences, Mr. O’Kelly wrote several letters to the different conferences, through the medium of the presiding elders. The letter was after this manner: “Brethren, and fellow-laborers, you are the only court

we have to lay our grievances before. We are not petitioning as criminals, for we have done no evil; but we demand of you the ordinances of justice. We are not allowed to be present. We are cut off, etc.”

Mr. O’Kelly says:

“Reports say, our letters were read and treated very unfriendly, through the power and influence of Francis (Asbury), he was justified and we condemned as the authors of the evil. And it was so, that the new constitution was received and the second council called. But previous to the sitting of the second council Francis (Asbury) wrote letters to the Virginia preachers after this manner: ‘I advise that you all meet in conference among yourselves, and if you will submit to the new plan of government, send your delegates to the council. The council shall concern only with the temporalities of the church; you have my last will and testament.’

“We immediately collected ourselves together in conference, in the county of Mecklenburg, to consider the matter. After some debating, I spake after this manner: ‘Let us wait to see these promises fulfilled. Can Francis (Asbury) assure us what the conclusion of the next council shall be? And that is not all; the Dr. (Coke) is interested in the temporalities, and can we act honestly in entailing the whole on (Francis) and the council in his absence? My advice is, that we write an affectionate letter, but send no delegate.’ The saying pleased the brethren generally. I then read the contents of a long letter sent to us by Mr. T., a teacher of Latin. And thus it was written:

“ ‘Brother preachers, the people confide in you ; give away your privileges with caution ! This matter is pregnant with great consequences. By assenting to the grand council, a plan is laid for the Episcopal dignity. You must unavoidably be guilty of subverting, ruining, and sooner or later totally destroying the glorious fabric in America. By rejecting it you will settle and strengthen the well erected tower, on the walls of Zion, for the bulwark defense of the city of God. May that city ever flourish, may you be her tender guardians.

“ ‘Watchmen, the church requires no grandeur in the administration of her affairs ; simplicity of government suits her. When we view the church in her primitive state, her government was extremely simple and natural. No assuming after preeminence ; no itching after absolute power. While the church remained in gospel simplicity, see how the kingdom of Jesus spread, till hell trembled to the center.

“ ‘Look back on history, and behold the ruins such changes have brought. If you have seen the fatal errors (in aggrandizing bishops) avoid them yourselves. May wisdom and grace guide you ; so prays your friend,
(Signed) THOMPSON.’ ”

After this Mr. Asbury cut off a part of Mr. O’Kelly’s district, and appointed a preacher who, he thought, was favorable to himself.

The second council met on December 1, 1790, in Baltimore, Maryland. Mr. O’Kelly did not attend this meeting. In the first place they proclaimed the establishment of the new government. In the second place they considered the authority they were invested

with. "In all temporal matters to act decisively; and to recommend new canons to the district conferences, as alterations to be made in old ones. Did Francis forget his last will? The rest of the canons, etc., are they not written in the council book?"

Mr. O'Kelly has this to say in regard to the proceedings of the second council:

"When I looked over the resolutions of the second council, (which I have before me) containing more than thirty canons, and the whole consisted of book-selling funds, subscriptions, the credit of Cokesbury, with arbitrary restrictions on the people of the districts, I considered that as the name of God was not mentioned in the book, the Lord was not in the council, and as the whole scheme appeared to be money, money, etc., I considered those preachers who had gone to merchandising, were in the best business, with respect to monies; because what they received honestly, would be for value received, and their own families would receive the profits arising.

"I entreat the church to read the canons of that council, December 1, 1790. I know the people are taught to believe that these heavy, and repeated collections for funds, and colleges, are acts of charity; and the objects are said to be worn out preachers, distressed widows, and charity boys. Let the whole be examined, and a fair estimation be shown; then on the other hand, let the poor relieved widows, poor local preachers, and charity boys come forth; and let us see how it will tally. I believe there are many in the church who could wish matters brought to this issue.

“Did not Francis mock us when he sent petitions through all his provinces, urging every member, male and female, to send him relief? He told his preachers that if they did not exert themselves in ‘stirring up the people’ that likely they would hear of his being in jail. Then left us, and went straightway to a certain Mr. Davis, and agreed to raise (if the Methodists can tell true) three thousand pounds to assist the said Davis in erecting a college.

“I believe that God sent out Methodist preachers, not to build colleges, but build up a holy, simple hearted people, and a select meeting is a better school for that purpose than a college. I have no design to reflect on learning, only let gentlemen see to that.”

It was said by some that the reason Mr. O’Kelly left the council, was because he was not elected a bishop at the first meeting. His answer to this was: “I can appeal to the Lord, and am ready now to be qualified, that the man hath belied me to my face.”

For the year 1791 two conferences were held in Virginia—one at Petersburg, April 20th, and one at Hanover, April 26th—and Mr. O’Kelly was appointed presiding elder over the following circuits: Cumberland, Mecklenburg, Amelia, Brunswick, Greenbrier, Sussex, Surry, Bedford, Banks, Botetourt, Halifax, Mattamuskeet. Dr. Thomas Coke was present at these conferences. All the time this discussion as to the plan of government for the church was on Mr. O’Kelly and Dr. Coke had been in correspondence, and may have informed Mr. Wesley of the course of Mr. Asbury in America. He also became a voluminous letter writer

at home, and with his associates made a powerful impression upon the leading preachers and laymen, not against the council only but in favor of a more liberal policy for the government of the church. Dr. Coke had been called to England by the death of Mr. Wesley, and their correspondence continued, for Mr. Asbury says in his "Journal," "James O'Kelly's letters had reached London." These letters won Dr. Coke over to his side, and soon a general conference was called to meet in Baltimore, Maryland.

Again we will let Mr. O'Kelly tell the purpose for which this meeting was called: "(Dr. Coke) pleaded my cause in conference; withstood Francis to the face; condemned his conduct, and (he) being the senior, had a general meeting appointed according to our request. At which meeting of the preachers, the new form of government should be fairly investigated, and the institutions stand or fall by the decision of that convention. Thomas (Coke) informed us that the General Conference was appointed, in order to overlook the proceedings of the council, and that it should stand or fall by the decision of that meeting. Francis was sore displeased, but Thomas highly approved of my conduct, and said that the treatment I had met with in his absence should not be passed in silence, but be laid over for conference. Moreover, Thomas spake unto me again, after this manner: 'Methodism is gone. But remember, when we meet together and overthrow the new constitution, as I believe we shall; if Mr. is not satisfied with the government as it stood before,

we will contend for a republican government. Give me thy hand. Fear not, I am a friend to America."

Mr. Asbury said that he agreed to the meeting for the sake of peace. At this time it seemed that Dr. Coke and Mr. O'Kelly had the same ideas about church government.

The truth of the matter seems to be this: Dr. Coke was striving to get in position to be above Bishop Asbury in authority. Mr. Asbury's goal was to be at the head of American Methodism. If Dr. Coke with the influence of James O'Kelly and his associates could overturn the plan of government proclaimed by the second council, and install a more liberal policy, then as the advocate of the new plan he knew that he would be first, and Mr. Asbury second. On the other hand if this could not be carried out, he was in correspondence with Bishop White, of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, regarding a reunion of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, from which they had been formally separated for about seven years. If this could be accomplished, again Dr. Coke would stand ahead of Mr. Asbury. The contest of 1791 and '92 was between Dr. Coke and Bishop Asbury for the supremacy in American Methodism, and each knew that James O'Kelly carried the balance of power between them. Dr. Coke was bidding for O'Kelly's influence in the coming contest, and Mr. Asbury was trying to reconcile Coke, and at the same time bidding high for the influence of O'Kelly.

The letter that did the mischief was the one men-

tioned from Dr. Coke to Bishop White. The Doctor was in a hurry to receive an answer, and when it came it was seen by Mr. Asbury first.*

This opened up Dr. Coke's plans at this time in full to Mr. Asbury, and he either had to confess his purpose and seek pardon, or go into an open fight. He seems to have preferred the former, and his hopes of gaining supremacy that way were blighted. Now only one course remained for him, and that was with the aid of O'Kelly to try to install a more liberal policy in the government of the church.

In the meantime John Wesley died, and Dr. Coke hastened to England. As to the attitude he showed to Mr. O'Kelly at the time of his departure let his letter tell:

WILMINGTON, May 4, 1791.

To Brother O'Kelly:

DEAR FRIEND:—I have written a letter of a sheet and a half to you, but on consideration I believe I shall not send it to you till I reach Europe; then I shall probably write as much again to you. By this time you

* Bishop White's reply to Dr. Coke was received at Philip Roger's, between the departure of Dr. Coke from Baltimore, May 2d, and after Mr. Asbury's departure after the conference had adjourned. It was handed to Mr. Asbury by Mr. Rogers as in his estimation the proper custodian. Bishop White says that he ascertained his letter "was opened in his (Coke's) absence" by Mr. Asbury, "such a freedom being understood, as I supposed to arise out of the connection between the two gentlemen. But for this part of the statement I can not vouch." Mr. Asbury and Dr. Coke's relations at this time were strained.—Drinkhouse's *History of the Methodist Reform and the Methodist Protestant Church*, Vol. 1, p. 412.

have probably been informed of our great loss in the death of Mr. Wesley. I am hastening to Europe in this important crisis. You may depend on my being with you, God willing, at the General Conference. I think no step will be taken during my absence to prevent the General Conference; it would be so gross an insult on truth, justice, mercy and peace that it will not be, I think, attempted. If it be so, and successfully, we will call a congress.

I expect you to be faithful. But as Mordecai said to Esther, think not with thyself that thou shalt escape more than others; for, if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time then shall enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed. Oh, be firm, be firm, and very cautious, and very wise, and depend upon a faithful friend in

THOMAS COKE.

(After writing this letter it will be seen that he proved false to Mr. O'Kelly at the General Conference of 1792.)

About this time Bishop Asbury wrote a letter to Mr. O'Kelly which shows his attitude toward him at that time. James O'Kelly says when he was in the Baltimore Conference of 1792, "I remembered the letters I had received from (Francis) awhile before, which spake on this wise: 'Let all past conduct between thee and me be buried, and never come before the conference or elsewhere; send me the dove. I saw thy face was not toward me in all the council, therefore I did not treat thee with that respect due to one who had suffered so

much for the cause of truth, and liberty. I wrote the Doctor (Coke) that if he came this way again he would see trouble.'

FRANCIS."

Again Dr. Coke, on May 4, 1791, as he was about to sail for England, issued a circular letter and among other things it said: "Five things we have in view. (1) Abolition of the arbitrary aristocracy. (2) The investing of the nomination of the presiding elders in the conferences of the districts. (3) The limitation of the districts to be invested in the General Conference. (4) An appeal allowed each preacher on the reading of the stations. (5) A General Conference of at least two-thirds of the preachers as a check upon everything. Oh, stand up for liberty, be friends of mankind in all things."

On July 7, 1791, Rev. Jesse Lee put a paper in Bishop Asbury's hand proposing the election of not less than two, nor more than four preachers from each conference, to form a General Conference in Baltimore in December, 1792, to be continued annually. This is, perhaps, the first public suggestion of a delegated General Conference with a plan. We make an observation here. James O'Kelly's ideas were spreading, for this happened in New England. Lee at this time was prominent in the North and O'Kelly in the South, and both were opposed to the council, and in favor of a General Conference.

All seemed to see now that there was too much power vested in one man. There was no appeal from his word, and his word was law. The fourth article in Dr.

Coke's circular letter was the one over which James O'Kelly withdrew from the General Conference of 1792, and made the Christian Church a possibility.

We give an instance to show how the bishop used his authority. One of the early preachers tells that Sylvester Hutchinson, a powerful and acceptable preacher of his time, was left off the minutes and without appointment by Mr. Asbury, without the consent of the Conference, while he was on a visit to his childhood's home. Finding on his return that his name was dropped, he remonstrated with Mr. Asbury and offered to continue in the ministry. Mr. Asbury finally offered him a circuit on which he was not acceptable. There was also another preacher who was not very acceptable where he had been sent, and Hutchinson and he proposed to Mr. Asbury that they should be exchanged; but this was refused, and turning to Mr. Hutchinson, he said: "Go there or go home." Mr. Hutchinson answered: "Then I must go home." And thus about 1805 ended his connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church.*

This was not an isolated case. Bishop Asbury was slow to realize the great principle in church government, namely: A government of the people, by the people, and for the people, is but another expression for the incarnation of the gospel of Christ in the social relations.

We may now sum up the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America from 1784 to 1792, and say that it was without even so much as a semblance of a

* Colbert, related by Drinkhouse in his *History of the Methodist Reform and the Methodist Protestant Church*, Vol. 1, p. 417.

constitution, and during this time there was but one law and that was: *The will of Mr. Francis Asbury*. This Mr. O'Kelly could not endure, for in the heat of the struggle for civil liberty he had shouldered his musket, and fought, and suffered imprisonment in order that he might with others be rid of tyranny and oppression, and now he was not willing to be oppressed in ecclesiastical matters by any man, unless he might have some means of redress.

CHAPTER VII.

O'KELLY IN 1792—A GLANCE AT POLITICAL HISTORY —THE BALTIMORE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

Thus far we have endeavored to give the best account possible of O'Kelly's life and work from 1775 to 1792, in order that it might be seen that James O'Kelly was a man of more than ordinary ability and that the Methodists of Virginia and North Carolina, as well as some in England, so recognized him. And further we have given his history, as extensively as possible, that the reader might see that the cause of his withdrawal was *Governmental*, and not *Doctrinal*, as has been so often alleged.

Mr. O'Kelly had presided over the largest and most influential districts in southern Virginia and North Carolina. He was well known in almost every part of Virginia and in much of North Carolina, and also in Maryland. At this time he seemed to be at the height of his power and influence in the Methodist Episcopal Church of America. Only two men were above him in rank. He was well established in his calling, was a recognized leader in the church and had a good income for a clergyman of his day. At the time at which we have now arrived it seems that he had about conquered all the great obstacles and hindrances that come to a minister. He had convictions of his own as to right and wrong, and was not willing to give these up for any man's opinion. He had lived in an atmosphere in

which the germs of freedom were beginning to grow, both in civil and religious matters.

Let us take a retrospective view of the happenings, in church and state, during the fourteen years just traced. Virginia and North Carolina, with the other eleven colonies, had thrown off the tyrannical yoke of England, and had become members of the thirteen free States. The old law of primogeniture had been abolished, and all members of the same family stood on equal footing. For some years before the Revolutionary War the tide of public opinion had been setting in strongly against the Episcopal, or Established Church; public opinion having been shaped by such men as Jefferson and Madison. All had seen that the day was approaching when the high claims of the Episcopal Church must give way before reason and common sense. By the time the Revolutionary War broke out it is supposed that two-thirds of the people of Virginia sided with the dissenters; yet all the people had to pay tithes to support the Established Church. This grievance was loudly complained of, without any hope of redress, under the rule of the mother country. The first Republican Legislature was overwhelmed with petitions for the abolition of the church rates.

Soon the bill for Religious Freedom was passed by the General Assembly of Virginia, and this was the final step toward the breaking down of the effete Church Establishment, and the disruption of the unholy union of church and state. Some things that this bill set forth were: That to compel a man to support opinions that he disbelieved is sinful and tyrannical; that every man

should be free to give his contribution to the particular pastor whose morals he would make his pattern, and whose powers he feels to be most persuasive to righteousness; that no man should be proscribed on account of his religious opinions, that to impose such disabilities for such a reason is to encourage dishonesty, and hypocrisy; that truth is great and will prevail, that she is the proper and sufficient antagonist of error, which ceases to be dangerous when truth is free to combat it. These were declared to be the natural rights of mankind, and the Assembly further declared: "That if any Act shall be hereafter passed to repeal the present law or to narrow its operations, such Act will be an infringement of natural rights." To get these measures passed required some time. It was impossible, however, to kill them in the minds of the people. The measures were demanded by the masses.

This longing for freedom had not only extended to the affairs of state, but it had invaded the realms of religious thought, and men began to see that the time had come when every man was equal before God, and each one was entitled to his opinion on religious as well as on other matters. This sentiment seemed to pervade the entire country, and the Methodists of Virginia and North Carolina were not immune against it.

As we have seen in the course of this study, the storm had been gathering among the Methodists for some years. As far back as 1777 and '78, we found that there was some dissatisfaction in Virginia, and many of the ministers were of the opinion that certain changes were necessary for the good of the church.

Nothing had been done to stem the rising tide of dissatisfaction which had been increasing at a very rapid rate, as at every turn, since 1784, added impetus had been given thereto. At this time a mighty upheaval seemed imminent, in the form of church government, or a great rupture was at hand. The Methodist Episcopal Church of America had reached the parting of the ways.

In a land where liberty and freedom were the watchwords in the legislative halls of state and nation, there was no place for an ecclesiastical tyrant. The immortal Henry had proclaimed the great truth that "resistance to tyrants is obedience to God," and this sentiment had pervaded the masses of Virginia, and its influence was now being felt in the church.

As we have seen, Bishop Asbury had been showing himself very much of an ecclesiastical tyrant for some time. His word was law, and was given without counsel from any one. Mr. O'Kelly had observed this trend of affairs on many occasions, and had mentioned the fact to Mr. Asbury at one time, only to receive the following reply: "Do you think I am going to put myself on a level with you?"

Such was the state of affairs when the General Conference met in Baltimore, Maryland, November 1, 1792. This meeting was of great interest to both preachers and people. Contemporary history shows that this was the largest and most influential gathering of preachers, from every section of the country, ever assembled up to that time, and all were expecting that something of great importance would take place in consequence of the meeting. No such gathering had been

held since the "Christmas Conference" of 1784. For eight years James O'Kelly had zealously labored for this General Conference or something of the kind. It was different in some respects from any meeting held before, and some writers say that to-day the Methodist Episcopal Church owes that valuable constituent of its polity, "The General Conference," to James O'Kelly.

Dr. Coke and Bishop Asbury had become warm friends, during the past few months, (since the instance recorded about the letters in the last chapter), and there is little doubt that the doctor had secretly promised the bishop to abandon Mr. O'Kelly and the reform movement in America, and to once more put himself under the absolute direction of Mr. Asbury.

For several days before the General Conference met, Mr. Asbury had been closeted with the preachers at a Mr. Roger's. But James O'Kelly, and no one of his way of thinking, was supposed to be there. Here the business of the meeting was planned. It was a prudent thing for Mr. Asbury that this ante-meeting was held, for James O'Kelly had been diligent in mustering his forces, and no one knew better than Mr. Asbury the strategic importance of holding the key to the situation.

In regard to the gathering Mr. O'Kelly says: "Just at the eve of business the Dr. (Coke) appeared. His presence revived me for I thought my best *friend* had come to town. I perceived by the countenance of Francis (Asbury) that he rejoiced to see Thomas (Coke). And, after the salutation, fixed him in the chair. I began to think that Thomas (Coke) had taken the alarm, and rather than be expelled as John (Wesley)

was, he had stepped over to the stronger side, and left me to suffer, and it was so. Then proceeded Francis (Asbury), according to his foreknowledge, predestination and sovereign power, to choose out of Conference a few men, who formed the privy council. Then he proceeded to read their names, and ask if there was any objection to any of them. And it was so that my name was among them. He appointed for us to meet him (and Thomas Coke) that evening, in a private house. Conference adjourned."

A regulation was proposed on the first day of the conference and carried, which provided that two-thirds of the members could abolish an old law or make a new one; but that a majority might alter or amend any existing law. It was then agreed that as the council had been so unsatisfactory to both preachers and bishops that it would not be mentioned at this conference. This may have been done in order to try to weaken Mr. O'Kelly's position.

Mr. O'Kelly met with the committee named in the evening. We will let him tell what was done:

"I met the select number that evening, according to appointment, and found them engaged in revising our old form of discipline. My thoughts were many but my words were few. They looked one at another, and one turned toward me, and addressed me in the following manner: 'Will you pass your word to abide by what this conference may do?' My answer was: 'You alarm me. Tell me (continued I) what you intend to do?' They answered and said: 'We can not tell; but we will pass our word to abide by the decision of this

conference.' I utterly refused to pass my word. I then saw why they wanted me in that meeting.

"And it came to pass on the morrow, that conference met pursuant to adjournment. Then arose Thomas (Coke), the President, and reported to conference the resolves of the committee, etc. Moreover Thomas (Coke) continued his speech and said: 'The members of this conference are the representatives of the people; and we are to all *intents the legislature* of the Methodist Episcopal Church; and the government is *aristocratical*. You may call me a weather-cock!'"

How do these words compare with those of Dr. Coke to James O'Kelly in the Wilmington letter? How do these sentiments compare with his circular letter? Here is where James O'Kelly met his Waterloo.

About it he says: "This speech (the quotation above) affected many minds, because they justly expected the affairs of the council to have come before them; that being the business for which we were called together. Some of the members at sundry times would interrupt the president after this manner: 'But where are the council affairs, etc.?—that being the cause of this meeting.' Thomas (Coke) would arise and warmly oppose, and demand silence on the subject; and silence it was. In our debates if at any time we were led to speak of the conduct of Francis (Asbury) he would leave the house."

According to some writers, on the second day of the conference James O'Kelly brought in a resolution which is given by Rev. Jesse Lee, as follows: "After the bishop appoints the preachers at Conference to their

several circuits, if any one thinks himself injured by the appointment, he shall have the liberty to appeal to the Conference and state his objection, and if the Conference approve his objection, the Bishop shall appoint him to another circuit." This is known in Methodist history as the "Right of Appeal."

This motion brought forth a long debate, the arguments for and against the proposition were weighty, and handled in a masterly manner. There had never been a subject before the body that as fully called forth the strength of the preachers. At first a large majority of the preachers appeared to be in favor of the motion, and Bishop Asbury retired as it directly involved his administration. Many feared that the time honored Wesleyan plan would be swept away by the spirit of innovation. They knew that the English Methodists had inaugurated the "Stationing Committee," which included the preacher's right of appeal, in 1791, and the news of this had reached America.

It was only by the skillful maneuverings of Rev. John Dickens, one of the ablest men of the body, now book-steward, and a staunch friend of Bishop Asbury's, that a proposition was made to divide the question in two parts, thus: 1. Shall the bishop appoint the preachers to the circuits? 2. Shall a preacher be allowed an appeal? After some debate the motion to divide the question was carried. Then the first part of the question was put and carried unanimously. Then the question was raised as to whether the second part was a new rule, or an amendment to an old one. If it were a new rule it would require a two-thirds vote.

If it were an amendment to an old rule it would only require a majority. After debate it was agreed that it was an amendment to an old rule. Each person by a ruling was at liberty, if he chose, to speak three times on each question. By dividing the question and then taking it up by sections this subject was under discussion for two or three days. Sunday intervened, and Dr. Thomas Coke preached in the morning, and James O'Kelly in the afternoon, from the text: "Lord increase our faith."

On Monday the debate was begun anew, and continued through the day; and at night they went to Mr. Otterbein's German Church, and continued until near bedtime, when the vote was taken, and the motion was lost by a large majority. For fear that some might think that Rev. James O'Kelly stood alone on this question and wanted to carry the reform measure for some personal reason it will be said that the ablest men of American Methodism were arrayed against each other, and the discussion was led chiefly by James O'Kelly, Ivey, Hull, Haggard, Davis, Garrettson and Swift for the affirmative; while John Dickens, Henry Willis, and perhaps Jesse Lee were for the negative.*

Then it is recorded that a revival was kindled in the city, and many of the preachers cared more about the prosperity of the churches, than they did for the controversies of the conference. Furthermore it would seem that these debates on the "Right of Appeal" were drawn out for several days and nights, until many had become tired and worn, and when an opportune time for the

* See Stephens's *History of Methodism*, Vol. 3, p. 16.

negative had arrived, the vote on the second section was put so it would be lost by a majority.

Rev. William McKendree, who was afterwards so prominent as bishop, was among the number favoring Mr. O'Kelly's resolution, and although he was only a young man, one of his impassioned utterances has been preserved, and was used as a slogan by the reformers of 1820-30. James O'Kelly was president of the quarterly conference that recommended Mr. McKendree for the ministry. And after the withdrawal of Mr. O'Kelly, Mr. McKendree and Rev. Rice Haggard were two of the ministers who handed in their resignations to Bishop Asbury on November 26, 1792, the Virginia Conference being in session at Manchester, Virginia.

Let us see what Rev. James O'Kelly has to say regarding the debate:

"The debates of the synod turned chiefly on Episcopal dignity. The Virginians for awhile did distinguish themselves in defending their ecclesiastical *liberties*, but they fainted in the struggle. Richard Ivey exceeded himself, he spake with tears, and in the fear of God, and much to the purpose, crying popery, etc. If at any time a minister would move to abridge (in any degree) the bishop's power, the defenders of that faith would not only oppose the motion, but would charge the member with something like treason, as it were. We still complained heavily of such illegal and radical alterations. Their cry was: 'Every general conference is possessed of a right to form their own preliminaries.' Thus we see the government is subject to perpetual innovations.

“It would have been an unspeakable blessing to the Methodist church, if we had been allowed to have done the business for which we met, because it would necessarily have led us into the very merit of the cause, or a full investigation of church government. I began to see that equity and gospel simplicity would be obliged to retreat, for power and policy would overcome the minority. I feared the ministers were carried away by an adventurous leader. I then arose, and *stood before the assembly, with the New Testament of our Lord Jesus in my hand*, and spake after this manner: Brethren hearken unto me, put away all other books, and forms and let this be the only *criterion* and that will satisfy me. (The italics are supplied, except the last word.) I thought the ministers of Christ would unanimously agree to such a proposal.

“But alas, they opposed the motion! A certain member whose name was John (very likely Dickens) withstood me, and spake after this manner: ‘The Scripture is by no means a sufficient form of government. The Lord has left that business for his ministers to do suitable to times and places, etc.’ I withstood him for a season, but in vain; the motion was lost. I now saw, that moderate episcopacy was rising to its wonted and intended dignity. I discovered, also, that districts had lost their suffrages.

“I considered that the stations of the Lord’s ministers rested entirely with Francis (Asbury), so that unless that absolute power could be abridged the best of men might even be injured, and run out of the connection. I now moved again after this manner: Let a preacher

who thinks himself injured in his appointment, have an appeal to the district conference. The motion was seconded, and warmly debated. William McKendree, with several more did with holy zeal strive with me for liberty. Conference adjourned till the second day of the next week, at which time they resumed the debates with double vigor.

"Some professed fears, that if an appeal was allowed it would reflect on the wisdom and goodness of the bishop, etc. Others saw, or thought they saw, that such liberty would be injurious to the church, because preachers would ever be appealing; and they would take each other's part, so that easy and wealthy circuits would be crowded with preachers, while the poor circuits would be left desolate. Heavy reflections on the conference; had any other people said as much, it would have been thought hard persecution. Was this ignorance, or policy?

"It was urged by several, that the bishop always appointed well, as far as they knew. I prayed them not to arrogate infallibility to the bishop; for in my judgment, he had made some very injudicious appointments.

"Then arose an elder and spake after this manner: 'Where is the man that will say, the bishop ever injured a preacher?' The interrogative was repeated, and at last a young man whose name was Rice (perhaps Haggard), assured the conference that he had known two preachers who were injured by the Bishop as he thought.

"Then members arose, out of order, as men alarmed, and as though treason had been heard. The very cry

was 'He has impeached the bishop.' The worthy minister arose and asked pardon, (for speaking the truth) inasmuch as he did not intend it as an impeachment.

"And it came to pass on the morrow, conference met pursuant to adjournment, and revived the former dispute. The appellants appeared to display invincible courage; and, in a Christian spirit, (they) still opposed the oppressive measures, whereby the bishop or his deputy, might banish a minister, or expel him from the connection; for if a minister should refuse to take a station, even in the British Islands, he must be neglected, having no station; and stand as a cipher, with a wounded character. One arose and held forth after this manner: 'This may satisfy those who desire an appeal, that is they may appeal to the general conference.' My answer to this illogical proposition was after this manner: Shall a preacher who is injured this year, then, after passing through his distress, (if not death), at the expiration of four years, appeal? For what? For vengeance? The mischief has been done. Moreover, what happened the last evening has not escaped my memory; a worthy character had to ask pardon for declaring the truth when asked! However, to come to the point at once, if you desire any further testimony relative to the bishop's injuring any one: I am the man he has injured.*

"There followed a profound silence, a few sighs, but no reply. Had there been aught against me, then was the time to have tried me, when I laid myself at their

* For confirmation of this statement see Chapter 12, verse 14, of O'Kelly's *Apology*.

own judgment seat. A little after the going down of the sun, conference adjourned to the Dutch church, where a long dispute was finished by candle-light. The debates were more powerful than ever, yet with a deal of Christian moderation, I was entirely silent. Hope Hull, a worthy elder, sounded a proper alarm. He exceeded himself by far; I could wish his words were written in a book. He spake after this manner: 'O heavens! Are we not Americans? Did not our fathers bleed to free their sons from the British yoke? And shall we be slaves to ecclesiastical oppression?' He lifted up his voice and cried, 'What, no appeal for an injured brother? Are these things so? Am I in my senses?'

"Henry (Willis) arose, and displayed his political abilities, exclaiming against a balance of power; with an essay on church history. Stephen Davis, in whom was the spirit of wisdom, withstood the celebrated Henry (Willis) assuring us, that the last arguments were badly founded, 'we are far gone into popery.'

"Quickly after this the vote was taken. Ah! fatal hour, the motion was lost, and out of an hundred and more, we had a small minority. Some withdrew from that hour, resolving to enjoy their liberties at the expense of society; and hold fast faith, and a good conscience. Will not these words cause the ears of an American to tingle? Shall an injured man have an appeal? No!"

Thomas Ware, a preacher who was present, gives the rationale of the defeat of Mr. O'Kelly's motion. He says: "Had O'Kelly's proposition been differently managed it might possibly have been carried. For my-

self I did not at first see anything very objectionable in it. But when it came to be debated, I very much disliked the spirit of those who advocated it, and wondered at the severity in which the movers, and others who spoke in favor of it, indulged in the course of their remarks. The advocates of the opposite side were more dispassionate and argumentative. Hearing all that was said on both sides, I was finally convinced that the motion for such an appeal ought not to carry.”*

Dr. E. J. Drinkhouse in his *History of the Methodist Reform and the Methodist Protestant Church* on page 436 has this to say regarding the loss of Mr. O’Kelly’s motion: “The sagacious Asbury foresaw what would thus happen under O’Kelly’s leadership, and, by frequent absences from the conference, his magnetic personal presence, awesome to most of the preachers, was lost upon the advocates of repeal, and Dr. Coke gave them full latitude for extreme denunciations degenerating into personality. There were enough present on the other side, wily and composed, who urged on their opponents. It is also a common experience in deliberative assemblies, that a proposition, however popular at first, by acrimonious debate gets into a position of doubt, and then, the longer it is continued, the less its chances of success; its timid friends absenting themselves, and so a default. Over confidence was another element in the defeat. Coke was believed to favor it until he arrived and showed his perfidy. O’Kelly had rallied most of the leading preachers, so that he

* Drinkhouse’s *History of the Methodist Reform and the Methodist Protestant Church*, Vol. 1, pp. 435-6.

came to Conference backed, as he believed, by a strong majority, and he presumed upon it. It was kept a full week upon the anvil of discussion, and was beaten out of all shape. A night session was called, sure to dis-temper speech and action. One hundred and fifty members in the city, the vote was taken by something over a hundred. These considerations are recited because otherwise it is impossible to account for the defeat of a measure every way amenable to reason. It had just been carried by the English preachers, among other guarantees in the British Conference, of 1792, and from which Dr. Coke was fresh. He knew of it, and probably informed Asbury, but they made no sign. If O'Kelly knew of it, it was not brought forward. But it is morally certain he did not, for it would have been a powerful argument on his side, and would probably have settled the vote affirmatively. It has continued a constitutional right of every Wesleyan preacher the world over. It has been incorporated into the organic law of all liberal Methodism. It is an essential feature of the Methodist Protestant Church, and wherever adopted it has proved a safeguard with no injurious results to the itinerancy of the Church."

From this we are led to believe that our surmise some pages back was perhaps correct, viz: that the debate was drawled out for some days in order that the preachers might become disgusted with the one question, and many would leave to attend the revival, and when an opportune time arrived the question was put and lost. "The Right of Appeal" in one way or another is yet working its way into American Methodism, it has had

its substitute in English Methodism since 1791, and the Methodist Protestant Church is an example of its growth in the old church in America.*

* Some of them (those in favor of the "Right of Appeal") said that "It was a shame for a man to accept such lordship, much more to *claim* it, and that they who would submit to this absolute dominion must forfeit all claims to freedom, and ought to have their ears bored through with an awl, and be fastened to their master's door and become slaves for life." One said that "To be denied such an appeal was an insult to his understanding, and a species of tyranny to which others might submit if they chose, but for his part he must be excused for saying he could not."

CHAPTER VIII.

JAMES O'KELLY'S SECESSION FROM THE METHODIST
EPISCOPAL CHURCH—EFFORTS TO RECONCILE—MR.
ASBURY'S CONDUCT TOWARD O'KELLY—THE CON-
FERENCES IN CHARLOTTE COUNTY AND AT PINEY
GROVE—THE MANAKINTOWN AND THE LEBANON
CONFERENCES.

Rev. Jesse Lee in his history, says: "The next morning when conference assembled we received a letter from Mr. O'Kelly, and a few other preachers, directed to the conference, informing us that they could no longer sit among us, because the appeal was not allowed." When the "Right of Appeal" was lost O'Kelly and some of his most ardent supporters, felt that their cause was lost, and that the hope of religious freedom, in the ranks of Methodism, was a thing of the past, and so this letter was sent to the conference, and they began at once to consider what plan would be best for them in the future.

We shall see what Mr. O'Kelly's motive was for withdrawal. Note the circumstances. O'Kelly writes:

"It was surely a very fatal hour of papal darkness, in which a law passed, that an injured minister in the church of Christ, should have no redress; men may make a thousand turns, yet the declaration remains a solemn truth which gave birth to a separation. After conference adjourned, I discovered my worthy friend and loving brother Woods, standing at my side waiting to conduct me and my few true brethren, through the dark to his house. There were we tenderly received,

and refreshed. The Lord remember him in mercy, and his worthy Christian lady, whose name is Mary; whom I dearly love in the Lord. Should they hereafter reject and despise me, I hope forever to love and esteem them both.

“I spent a great part of that night in groans and tears! On the morrow I implored the God of heaven to give me understanding. I consulted my friends, and in the fear of God, resolved not to return to conference. Further events were hid from me, I had only to look to God and walk by faith.

“I wrote to the synod a mournful farewell, saying, you now have the overflowing of a full heart. Adieu. I was informed that my letter was read in conference, against the will of the president: many tears were shed, etc. Several preachers were in that assembly who had been brought home by my ministry, under God. They knew I had been a father and a teacher to them.

“I still staid at my lodging, and it came to pass, they sent a committee to treat with me. I took them into my room, and we conversed freely, and lovingly; although they could not defend the government, nor the conduct of the president, yet they thought it advisable to submit. We kneeled down and prayed, and our prayers were immediately answered. We parted in love and tears. They reported in conference (if I was rightly informed) that they believed God was with me, and that I was aiming at his glory.”

We pause to make an observation. Bear the report of this committee in mind when you read some of the cruel things that were said about O’Kelly a little later in

his career—when the *conference* found he could not be reconciled, and see how the two will compare. It reminds one of the two days our Saviour spent near and in Jerusalem, when the multitude said one day, “Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord,” and in a very short time the multitude cried to Pilate, “Crucify *him*, crucify *him*, away with this *man* and release unto us Barabbas.”

“Thomas (Coke) was much displeased, arose and spake after the following manner: ‘I am,’ said he, ‘I am obliged to extend charity toward O’Kelly and others. They have done violence to their public faith; because they promised to abide by the decisions of this conference.’ One arose and declared that the assertion was entirely wrong.” (As we have seen this was never promised by Mr. O’Kelly. We can see also that he had done no more violence to his public faith than his accuser, Dr. Thomas Coke; and the inquiring reader is respectfully referred to his letter to Mr. O’Kelly from Wilmington, already quoted in this work; and to his letter to Bishop White, of Philadelphia, given in full by Dr. Drinkhouse in his *History of the Methodist Reform and the Methodist Protestant Church*, Vol. 1, p. 398-9 and 400.) “Then arose Thomas (Coke) in great warmth, and bound it with an affirmation, in the following manner: He lifted up his hand—I suppose to heaven, and offered to stake his salvation, on pain of damnation, to the truth of his assertion; or nearly so.”

Continuing Mr. O’Kelly says: “A member of the conference came to my lodging, and gave account of the conduct of Thomas (Coke), and that my character and

others were thereby injured. I wrote to Thomas (Coke), after this manner: O, sir, reverse the case. It was thyself that acted thus. 'Tis you that betrayed thy trust to me and others. You know this conference was called to investigate the new constitution, and to examine into past conduct; and our cause at this court of appeal, is not suffered to come forward. The slander is so public, I earnestly desire *Christian* satisfaction.

"The answer I received was after this manner: 'If you and the Virginia preachers will only meet me this night about the lighting of a candle, I will give you satisfaction.' "

This much is given by way of parenthesis in order that the reader might see what happened in the conference when Mr. O'Kelly and his friends were gone. We now go back to the cause of the separation. Mr. Asbury says: "Mr. O'Kelly being disappointed in not getting an appeal from any station made by me, withdrew from the connection and went off. For himself the conference well knew he could not complain of the regulation." James O'Kelly had been appointed to the Southern District of Virginia for ten consecutive years as elder, and such was his influence that he had nothing personally to fear as to his appointments, so we can see that it could not have been for a selfish motive. There was nothing for him to gain by having the "Right of Appeal" passed, yet he threw himself into the breach with the utterly unselfish purpose of securing protection to his preacher brethren, and not for himself.

By some it was charged that he was ambitious to be a bishop. It is true that Jesse Lee and himself by their

friends at least, were quasi candidates. When this imputation was heard by Mr. O'Kelly he made the solemn affirmation, "I arose before the people, and spake after this manner,—I can appeal to the Lord, and am now ready to be qualified, that the man hath belied me to my face." This does not look as though he was ever ambitious to be a bishop. When these accusations are all sifted out and found untrue, there can be but one motive assigned, namely, protection to the injured preacher, whoever he might be. The protection was to be for others, and not for himself.

After sending the letter before mentioned, Mr. O'Kelly and the preachers that were particularly influenced by him, waited in town for a day or two longer, and then set off for Virginia, taking their saddlebags, great coats, and other bundles on their shoulders and arms, and walked on foot to the place where they had left their horses, which was about twelve miles from town. Rev. Jesse Lee says in regard to their departure: "I stood and looked after them as they went off, and observed to one of the preachers, that I was sorry to see the old man go off in that way, for I was persuaded that he would not be quiet long, but would try to be at the head of some party. The preacher then informed me that Mr. O'Kelly denied the doctrine of the Trinity and preached against it, by saying that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were characters and not persons; and that these characters all belonged to Jesus Christ. That Jesus Christ was the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The preacher further said that it was his intention to have had O'Kelly tried at that conference for the

false doctrines which he had been preaching; and he believed that his leaving the conference was more out of fear of being brought to trial than on account of the appeal. But so it was Mr. O'Kelly never more united with the Methodists."

In regard to the first part of the quotation we would say that it seems that he did not so much desire to be at the head of some party as he did that all might have religious liberty, for had he desired to be at the head of some party he would have commenced work in that direction long before that time, and he would never have labored so hard to get the reform measure passed by the Methodist Episcopal Church of America.

In regard to the accusation we will say here and now that the name of this scandalizing preacher has never been known to this writer. More, Rev. Jesse Lee, and Bishop Asbury, seem never to have heard of the accusation before this time, and we may believe from what will follow that they paid little attention to its weight.*

The quotation from Mr. Lee has done James O'Kelly and the Christian Church more harm than any other paragraph of the same length ever penned to this date, and we make the rebuttal of this the subject of one chapter in this work.

One historian says of Mr. O'Kelly at this time: "He was a veteran, broken with age, an Irishman of fiery temperament, and, as usual with such temperaments, his conscience was weak and easily swayed by his prejudices; weak to yield to them, but strong to defend

* See Bishop Asbury's letter sent by messengers to Mr. O'Kelly after his return home; also the account of the committee meeting at night during the sitting of the Baltimore Conference.

them." Let us examine this more closely. He was now only about fifty-eight years old, and able to walk twelve miles with saddlebags, great coat and other baggage, and such was his vitality that he lived to be nearly ninety-two years old. The reader may judge for himself what light was thrown on Mr. O'Kelly and his adherents when they would not be reconciled.

Pure and simple secession is rarely justified and seldom succeeds. Mr. O'Kelly's withdrawal was a case of pure and simple secession. When the letter was received in conference from Mr. O'Kelly, Bishop Asbury at once set Dr. Coke in motion to conciliate him if possible. They knew his worth, and knew it meant a heavy collateral loss; they knew his power and influence in his section, and that a giant's strength was necessary to cope with him. Mr. O'Kelly was accordingly invited to an interview with Dr. Coke in private as we saw in the beginning of this chapter. We will now let him tell what was said and done:

"We met him at the time and place, took a room to ourselves, and there we withstood him to the face. I rehearsed his former engagements with me and others; and I considered such treatment exceedingly cruel. Stephen (Davis) not only charged him of being guilty of false assertions, but vulgar swearing. I was grieved at the hard speech. The Dr. appeared very calm. The little man confessed his sins, charged himself with false zeal, and in a very gentle manner, asked pardon ten thousand times.

"After these things, it was asked (in private) on what terms I would return. I answered after this manner:

In my distress for peace sake, only let an injured man have an appeal and I will return. He answered and said unto me, 'That can not be granted.'

"On further consideration I condemned my conduct, in that I offered to return on such slender terms; for I knew the government to be destitute of Scriptural authority. But such was my weakness, not knowing at that time what to do."

He then left Baltimore, as told by Rev. Jesse Lee, accompanied by Revs. John Robinson, Rice Haggard, John Allen, William McKendree and perhaps a few others, who subsequently helped him although they did not secede at this time.

Again Mr. O'Kelly says: "John (Robinson?) asked me what I thought of doing. My answer was, I must preach the gospel wherever a door is opened, etc., but I have no intention of a separate party. My brother answered and said, 'suppose souls are converted to God through your instrumentality, and ask your advice, what counsel would you give?' I answered him again after this manner; perhaps I should advise them to join the Methodists, rather than live out of society. 'Alas,' said he, 'will you advise others to subscribe to a government that you believe is quite destitute of divine authority?' I knew not what to answer."

Concerning the trip home Mr. O'Kelly gives the conversation above and then says:

"Indulgent heaven protected me home and the testimony of a good conscience supported my troubled mind. I set my heart to seek God, and to live one day at a time, as if never to see another. In the course of a few

days, there came messengers from Francis (Asbury) to me, to let me understand his sorrow, in the *loss of his right eye, right hand, and right foot*. Moreover, I was to have free access to their pulpits, and the sum of £10 annually because I had *suffered so much for the cause of truth and liberty*.*

"I accepted the former but not the latter. I went out again, preaching the everlasting gospel. Here we discover the unscriptural degree of power over the people. If Francis gives a grant to any minister to preach, and administer among them, their doors must be open. Then, if Francis sends his authority to shut the doors against the same minister, none must open. This is the 'power of the keys.'

"And it came to pass in those days (in my travels) I met with a present of £10 sent me from Francis (Asbury.) With the advice of friends I received it, and gave it in part pay, the same day, for a saddle horse, if

* At the Manchester Conference, Nov. 26th, 1792, Bishop Asbury himself made the following motion: "That whereas Mr. O'Kelly was an aged and dependent man, and might be driven by necessity to certain measures which in other circumstances he would not have recourse to, it would be best, if he would consent to it, to let him have a supernumerary station and his usual salary." In the place of this motion the following was passed by a majority: "Whereas, it appears that James O'Kelly's absence intimates an intention in him to stop traveling at large, as we suppose on account of his not being allowed an appeal; we, the Manchester Conference, conclude that if the rejection of the motion for the appeal be his only objection, and if he will travel, we will grant him the exclusive privilege of traveling where he pleases, of preaching where he pleases, and his £40 per annum, as usual: Provided, nevertheless, that he shall be amenable to the Conference for his moral and ministerial character."

I remember right. But behold the preacher who paid me the money, according to order, and took my receipt, took the advantage of me, and published abroad, that I received support from them.

“After these things I was met by one of their elders, who blamed me for leading the people into the nature of church government; whereas, they had no business with such knowledge. He added the money received also. I knew if I had my due, I ought to have had ten times as much. However, I was willing to replace it. Surely, continued I, *you did not intend it as hush money.* The people will ask, and I shall teach,” etc.

From these things we make this observation: James O’Kelly was one who could neither be coaxed, nor bribed from what he *believed* to be right. An English soldier had tried this plan with him before, as we have seen, and it would not work; and an English preacher could not move James O’Kelly from his rights, and the truth. Seeing this, Mr. Asbury left him and turned his attention to Rev. William McKendree.

James O’Kelly had no plan for future work. He had taken no forethought. He went to the Baltimore Conference certain of Dr. Coke’s assistance, and that meant success, and his ardent temperament could not brook the mortification of defeat. A writer has said: “Every revolution should be wrought out in men’s minds before it takes the shape of action.” Another has said: “No good general ever planned a battle well until he prepares for defeat.” Another has said: “Mankind needs time to accommodate themselves to great changes.” Mr. O’Kelly, without intending it, was driven onward by the

pressure of those disaffected elements which the "aristocratic system," Dr. Coke's favorite phrase for the policy then prevailing, had fomented, and which had lain dormant for a long time—at least since the General Conference of 1784. The thoughtful laity throughout the connection felt the galling yoke, and were only waiting an opportune time to assert their recognition. This is plain from the large concessions made the laity in the "Republican Methodist Church" as organized by James O'Kelly and his associates, and it can be shown that this was not responsible for the poor success of the Christian Church in its infancy.

Both Mr. Asbury and Mr. O'Kelly at this time were confronted by situations that were perilous in the extreme. Each seemed to have recoiled from the consequences and resorted to pacificatory means of averting a formal division. To show this we will give a quotation from Mr. Asbury's "Journal," Vol. 2, page 148:

"We agreed to let our displeased brethren preach among us and as Mr. O'Kelly is almost worn out the conference acceded to my proposal of giving him his £50 per annum, as when he traveled in the connection, provided he was peaceable, and forbade to excite divisions among the brethren."

At the Conference at Manchester, Virginia, Mr. Asbury left the Methodist pulpits open to him and the money to be given him was as each said for past services. However this was never received. This suggested neutrality did not, could not, last long. Mr. O'Kelly says: "I was quickly shut out of doors; none to publish my appointments, the people warned against hearing me

preach the gospel. This act of cruelty did not satisfy the rage of false zeal, but they fell upon my character, even to cruel reproaches. They picked up and retailed things they can not prove."

At this time Charlotte County, Virginia, was the hot-bed of O'Kellyism. Two meetings of the aggrieved members who sided with their loved elder and leader were held. Bishop Asbury, in his "Journal," Vol. 2, page 160, says: "I heard there was a conference appointed for the followers, or adherents, of James O'Kelly, at Reese Chapel in Charlotte County, Virginia, in 1792, to form what they called a free constitution, and a pure church, and to reject me and my creatures." Perhaps both meetings were held at the same church.*

At one of these meetings the seceders strove hard for union with their Methodist brethren, and even sent John Chapel and E. Almonds "over the great mountains with their petition" to Bishop Asbury for a reunion. Here they only asked for "some amendments." All their efforts were in vain. Mr. O'Kelly himself with others then drew up a very humble petition, pointing out a few of the evils they saw in the government of the Methodists, and prayed for union. "The people were forbidden," Mr. O'Kelly writes, "to sign these petitions,

* This church continued to be a place of worship for the Christians until the year 1879; at that time there were but few members, and they were unable to have regular preaching, the prospects were not good for a live church, and so a resolution was introduced in the North Carolina and Virginia Conference authorizing Hon. John M. Moring to sell the church and lot at Reese Chapel, Charlotte County, Virginia, for the benefit of the said conference.

on pain of expulsion from the Methodist Church, although it was urged by some that there was no law in the book of discipline against signing a petition. But the law was produced in the late book of discipline, page 58, because it amounted to the sowing of discord, etc. Thus our petitions fell through. The preachers desired all who were dissatisfied with the government to go out."

From the quotation given from Mr. Asbury's "Journal," Vol. 2, p. 160, and the account of Mr. O'Kelly, we get an idea of the situation again. We find that Mr. O'Kelly and his associates were asking and pleading for a compromise and union in their petitions to the bishop, and he was misreading their motives, and intentions. Mr. O'Kelly and his followers were at this time looked upon by the Methodists as aggrieved members, and they considered themselves as members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The idea of entire separation did not seem to have entered their minds. Their names were not dropped from the Methodist records until the next year.

Before the Virginia Conference met at Petersburg, Nov. 15, 1793, Mr. O'Kelly and his associates held a conference, August 2, 1793. We will let him tell his own story of the proceedings.

"And it came to pass after these things, we appointed a conference at Piney Grove in Chesterfield County, (Virginia) to confer on our present distress. We met according to appointment, and conversed on the subject of church government. We unanimously condemned the Episcopal government; but we desired union with

the people, and the method we pursued for the purpose was, we proposed an address to the bishop, individually, for him to consider our distress, and give us to meet with them on the occasion. We told him, we only requested that the present form of government might be examined, and tried by the Scripture, and amended according to the Holy Word. By so doing we hoped that a permanent plan for the union might be established. As for the *time* we would *cheerfully* wait.

“We elected men to carry in our address, and then adjourned until December.

“And it came to pass in those days, that Francis (Asbury) came on to conference in Petersburg, where he met with our address; but Francis being (as he calls it) a long-headed Englishman, and seeing the request so generous, that to refuse would disgrace him, and to comply would undo him, he threw it into chancery; I say into conference, and the result was, ‘he has no power to call a meeting.’ Then he denied our request. It was very cruel in the preachers, supposing Francis (Asbury) had no power, for them to suffer it to be. The reader will need no interpreter to tell the meaning of such conduct; it can speak for itself.

“And it came to pass on the twelfth month (of 1793) about the 25th day of the month, we met pursuant to adjournment at Manakintown to receive the answer from Francis (Asbury). Our friends made report that his answer to us was, ‘I have no power to call such a meeting as you wish; therefore, if five hundred preachers would come on their knees before me, I would not do it.’

"The answer sounded in our ears like the voice of Rehoboam. Therefore all hope of union was sunk. Nothing remained but 'to thy tents O Israel.' The door to the negotiation was shut. Therefore, a separation, or a slavish submission, was unavoidable; and we unanimously chose the former.

"We formed our ministers on an equality; gave the lay members a balance of power in the legislature, and left the executive business in the church collectively. But fearing we should err again, as we were young hands at the business, we resolved to establish nothing we had done before another general meeting. So adjourned conference."

The above facts prove conclusively that the "secession" of Rev. James O'Kelly was not as precipitate as adverse historians would make it. It was over a year before the conference was held at Manakintown, December 25, 1793. During this time the "seceders" had found that it was impossible to remain neutral. They decided simply not to submit, and were thus forced to form a separate organization. Manakintown was a memorable place, for there it was that the Virginia preachers, in 1779, under Dickens, Gatch, and others organized Methodism on a basis which would have placed it in harmony with the civil government, then in the throes of a successful revolution; they asserted and practiced the New Testament right of any body of Christians, in default of so-called regular order, to organize, appoint a presbytery, ordain preachers and secure the ordinances. As is common in every religious strife, the tongue, that "world of iniquity," scattered

firebrands, arrows, and death. Mr. Asbury in his "Journal" makes allusion to the bitterness and uncharitableness of the "O'Kellyites," and he even goes so far as to make a confession, involving himself. He says, February 2, 1793: "I am not enough in prayer. I have said more than was for the glory of God concerning those who have left the American connection, and who have reviled Mr. Wesley, Mr. Fletcher, Dr. Coke, and poor *me*." Here is where Bishop Asbury's imagination seems to have led him into error.

Has there been anything quoted from Mr. O'Kelly in this work that corresponds with Mr. Asbury's statement? We have practically given his *Apology* in full up to chapter 20, and we have never yet seen one line from O'Kelly's pen that could be construed as reviling Mr. Wesley, or Mr. Fletcher. On the other hand he always speaks in the kindest possible terms of John (Wesley) of England, and, indeed, Mr. O'Kelly seems to have been one of the first to discover that Wesley's name had been left off the "Minutes" of the American Conferences at the instance of some *one*. As for what he said about Bishops Asbury and Coke, the reader may form his own opinion as to which was correct.

We are told that the Manakintown conference was well attended, and orderly in proceedings. It is possible that there was only one traveling preacher present with Rev. James O'Kelly to join his fortunes with those of the new church, and that was Rev. Rice Haggard, who resisted all inducements offered to the "seceders" to return. This may be explained in the following manner:—the cost of such a stand in that day was very

great. The new church had no chapels, there was poor prospect for the support of the preachers, especially married men; and the whole power of the old church was brought to bear to try to crush the faction, and such was the spirit of persecution at the time that it was believed that to persecute was to do God's will. O'Kelly was joined by many local preachers, while the people in whole societies came to him and to the new church.

The name "Republican Methodist Church" was adopted at the Manakintown Conference, perhaps because the Republican party was strong politically, in Virginia at that time, and it was thought that it would add force to the movement.

Contemporary history says that, at this meeting, Mr. O'Kelly, as their leader, ordained their preachers, but this fact he does not mention in his account of the proceedings of the conference, but does tell that "as we had received letters from below, that we would consider their case, for they were as sheep having no shepherd; two ministers were appointed to visit these brethren below, to give light on the subject, either by way of public debates, or in private conversation; then to take the sense of the people. This was done according to order, and about one thousand souls departed from the ERRORS of Methodist Episcopacy in a few days."*

In regard to the next General Meeting Mr. O'Kelly has this to say: "Now it came to pass in the eighth month, on the fourth day of the month, in the year of Jesus Christ, 1794, the Republicans met in conference,

* Perhaps "below" was in what is now the Eastern Virginia Conference.

in Surry County (Virginia.)” (The place was then known as Lebanon Church, and now as “Old Lebanon” and is about one and one-half miles from the present Surry County Court-house. Hardly any trace of a church remains to tell the traveler and the antiquarian that it was there that this famous meeting was held.) “We held our conference with open doors that all might see and learn.” (This was very different from the Asburayan rule of closed doors, and secrecy of administration.) “After much disputing, several resolutions having passed, we discovered plainly, the minority were much dissatisfied, and therefore I moved that the whole should be reconsidered, that all might be agreed, if possible. And it was so, that a committee of seven men were appointed to form a plan of government, and lay it before the conference on the next day.

“The committee met, and strove hard for union of sentiment, and although we sought it earnestly with tears, yet to no purpose. At length it was proposed that we should lay aside every manuscript, and take the Word of God as recorded in the Scriptures. And it was right; because the primitive church had no government besides the Scriptures, as written by the Apostles. But in order to lead the minds of the religious to the law and the testimony, having never been taught to search the Scriptures for church discipline, we drew up a small sketch, as a guide and a light to the connection, nearly on this wise: We learn from the Book of God, that the church in general, includes all the real Christians in the world. Eph. 5:25; I Cor. 12:13, 14. Any number of Christians united in love, having Christ

for their head, and center of union, constitutes a church. In the primitive church were twelve chosen ministers whom Christ called apostles. Luke 6:13. The same were chosen witnesses. Acts 10:41. Those men were ambassadors, and possessed the keys of the kingdom, even the spirit of truth, which opened to them the mysteries of the kingdom of God; therefore Christ spake in them and by them; thus were they fully qualified, and authorized to write the last will and testament of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. There were elders in the church besides the apostles, who labored in the word and doctrine. Some of these could prophesy, speak with tongues, interpret, etc. But after those extraordinary days missionaries had run their race, and only one order of ministers existed in the church. Acts 20:17."

The first and most important thing that claimed their attention was by what name they should be known to the world. As we have said before, the organization had been called "Republican Methodist Church," from the fact that it was to be run on Republican principles; all to stand on an equal footing, and each to have a voice in the church.

Finally Rev. Rice Haggard stood up in the meeting with a copy of the New Testament in his hand and said: "Brethren, this is a sufficient rule of faith and practice, and by it we are told that the disciples were called *Christians*, and I move that henceforth and forever the followers of Christ be known as Christians simply." The motion was unanimously adopted, since which time they have had no other name for their organization.

Next a Rev. Mr. Hafferty, of North Carolina, moved

to take the Bible itself as their only creed, and this too was carried, and has so remained to this day.

Mr. O'Kelly says in regard to the report of the committee of seven:

"And it came to pass on the morrow, when conference had met, the brethren all present, the committee made report, and the saying pleased the multitude. Indeed the people rejoiced at the consolation, and gave glory to God for the light received. Thus, the blessed *Jesus* was proclaimed *King*, and the *Head* of the people, without *one* dissenting voice, cordially renouncing all human institutions in the church, as being a species of popery, and not fit to govern souls. Then as free citizens in the land of Columbia (America), and servants of the great *King*, we proceeded according to divine order, to ordain elders.

"Those preachers who were eligible, were set before the church, and the holy qualifications, as laid down by Paul, were read and explained. The church was then desired to say, if those men were their choice, or not. Then after prayer, we proceeded in the following manner: In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the authority of the Holy Scriptures, with the approbation of the church, and with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, we set apart this our brother, to the holy office of an elder in the church of God: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

"Thus the despised minority began to build on the *true basis*, our sure foundation. We were much delighted to find that the true hierarchy, or primitive

church government, which came down from heaven, was a republic, (Eph. 11:12,) although 'Christian Church' is the name."

In doctrine the Christians did not differ from the Methodist societies, but in the matter of church government they did. The whole cause from the beginning had been purely *governmental*, and not *doctrinal*, as some would try to show. Theirs was to be a "Republican"—no slavery—glorious church, free from all the evils of misgovernment. One of their first measures was to enact a leveling law. All preachers were to stand on the same footing. No grades were to be allowed in the ministry. No superiority or subordination was to be known among them. No one was to dictate to the other, and all were to be allowed the liberty of private judgment, so far as it did not conflict with the teachings of the New Testament. The lay members were to be allowed more liberty than they had been under the old system, from which they had separated. They agreed that all their plans and regulations made at their conferences should be merely advisory. Each individual church should call its own pastor, and was to enjoy the greatest possible freedom.

Mr. O'Kelly says: "We very plainly felt the loss of union with our Episcopal brethren. The preachers, especially, were much irritated, as the bitter saying published in their last minutes will show. The words are written thus: 'A few, indeed, who were as great enemies to the civil government under which they lived, as to our discipline, have left us; and now we have not a jarring string among us.' The cruel assertion above

written, is as destitute of truth as of love. We took it into consideration in our last conference, and it was unanimously answered thus: 'It is the unanimous opinion of this conference, that the charge is unjust and cruel; and so far as it applies to us, false.' " Later is given a letter from Mr. O'Kelly in which he answers the charge fully, and so we need only make one or more observations.

Mr. O'Kelly was put down as an enemy to the civil government, but alas, how untrue! During the struggle for independence, James O'Kelly was going from church to church preaching the gospel of peace to the distressed people, standing his draft as other men, serving his country faithfully, at the time that tried men's souls, marching on foot until he was completely worn out, made prisoner, and almost famished for bread because he would not disclose valuable information to the enemy. Escaping the enemy's hands, he again took up arms as a foot soldier, and was honorably discharged at the close of the war. And when the war was over he returned home to help rebuild that which the cruelty of war had destroyed. He once asked his accusers "which of the itinerant men have paid more to the support of government than I have done? Let us proceed to show receipts." And the challenge was never answered.

Compare briefly the career of his accuser. When the Revolutionary War broke out Mr. Asbury went into hiding at Judge White's, in Delaware, for fear of the Americans. Judge White was a Tory and so was Mr. Asbury, and that meant that they were not favorable to the cause of the Americans. When the troublesome

days of trial came he left his people to find the way of *life* the best they might, but his *person* must be safe, if possible, from those very people to whom he had been preaching, and who afterward set up the Republic. After the government was set up, we have never seen any record as to where or when he paid any taxes, or rendered any service whatever to the government. Let the reader make up his own mind as to who was the enemy to the civil government, and who was its true and tried friend.

The crisis had now come, the breach could not be healed, and no further attempts were made on either side to do it. The news of O'Kelly's "secession" soon became noised abroad throughout the connection, and polemical discussions divided the brethren, both of the ministry and the laity. It extended north as far as New England. About twenty-five preachers, in various parts of the connection, had ceased to travel, four had withdrawn.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LEBANON CONFERENCE OF 1791—THE RESULTS.

The ministers who met in "Old Lebanon Church," and organized the Christian Church, in August of 1794, had no other light than the spirit of God which illumined their hearts, and a love for religious liberty, which led them to fly from the first approach of ecclesiastical bondage, and a determination to see in this newly occupied country the right of private judgment, and the liberty of conscience, extended to all; and they set out upon their work not knowing, or even dreaming, of the results that would follow.

The reader will see that the motions by Revs. Rice, Haggard and Hafferty, and adopted at this conference, had in them the embodiment of the same truths that are found in the *Cardinal Principles of the Christian Church* of to-day. We mention these here, to show that there has been no necessity for a change since they were first adopted:

1. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only Head of the Church.
2. The name Christian to the exclusion of all party and sectarian names.
3. The Holy Bible, or the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament our only creed, and a sufficient rule of faith and practice.
4. Christian character, or vital piety, the only test of church fellowship and membership.

5. The right of private judgment, and the liberty of conscience, the privilege and duty of all.

With this broad platform, the name Christian as a distinctive title, and an expression of their acknowledgment of Christ as the Great Head of the Church, determined to receive and teach no doctrine that is not clearly revealed in the Bible, and to exact no test of Christian fellowship but Christian character or vital piety, extending the hand of brotherly love and union to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, and live in obedience to his commands, they spread their banner to the breeze, and for a time so attractive was the inscription on it that hundreds and thousands were ready to forsake former associations and do service under the new banner.

From the time of the adoption of their principles, Mr. O'Kelly, and his associates in the ministry, began aggressive work trying to save the world. For his part he labored incessantly to promote the interests of the young body, and, as we learn from Methodist historians, his labors were abundantly blessed. He was well and favorably known in the district in which he had labored so long, and with so much zeal.

During the years of this religious upheaval statesmen had been busy trying to carve out free constitutions for the different states, and the thinking public had become deeply interested in the subject, the thought of the times naturally leading to freedom in church as well as in state.

It is said of O'Kelly that "he tried to impress his views on the Methodists of Virginia and North Carolina, and that he was firmly opposed by Nicholson,

Leroy Cole, and William McKendree" who had recalled his resignation and was again in the Methodist ministry. These met Mr. O'Kelly in a public discussion in Portsmouth, Virginia, perhaps on the site of the old Methodist church yard on Glasgow street. This church remained Methodist, and the historian says that it was saved from a violent rupture by the discussion.

O'Kelly was very successful in the section where he had labored so long, and some of the churches, or societies, were brought over entirely to the new church. The ministers from the Methodist Church who "seceded" with him, in many instances brought their churches as well as their meeting-houses, with them. And in many instances, also the majority of the laity were favorable to the principles of the Christian Church, and the minority who remained loyal to the Methodist standard retired.

As to the popularity of the movement, we may judge by a comparison of the returns of the Methodist Church from his old district where his influence was greatest, that the people generally liked the new organization far better than they did the old. The year after the Lebanon Conference the number of communicants in the Methodist Church of Virginia decreased 3,670, and a writer said "they began to feel the effects of the division caused by the incessant efforts of James O'Kelly, and his followers." The Methodist returns for 1797 showed a decrease of 300 white members, in 1798, with sixty-three preachers on Virginia soil, and five hundred and forty members added from revivals, there was a small decrease. In 1799 the decrease was 336 whites, and

120 blacks. These decreases occurred notwithstanding the fact that the Methodists marshaled all their forces against the Christian Church, and were continually holding revivals in this section, and doing aggressive missionary work, and organizing new churches among the frontier settlements.

From such facts and figures we again get the idea that Mr. O'Kelly was a brilliant preacher, and had a strong hold upon the affections of the people.

CHAPTER X.

PREACHERS IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH—SOME WHO
“SECEDED” WITH O’KELLY, AND OTHERS WHO
JOINED LATER.

History has left only a partial list of O’Kelly’s co-laborers. We give account of some, yet feel persuaded that there are others who now lie in unmarked graves and who did valiant service in the early Christian Church, but their names are now forgotten.

Prominent among those mentioned we find the name of Rev. Rice Haggard, who suggested the name “Christian Church” for the body of Mr. O’Kelly’s followers. He lived in St. Bride’s Parish, Norfolk County, Virginia, was the author of several books and pamphlets, and his early work was in Virginia. When he traveled as a Methodist minister he labored in many parts of the State. He is spoken of by all as a good man, and an able leader. His writings were on the doctrines of the Christian Church. In 1804 he published his work on the “Union of All the Followers of Christ in One Church.” This was widely read by friends and foes of the new church. Late in life he moved to Cumberland County, Kentucky, and there he united with the Christians, and remained firm until his death. It is said that Barton W. Stone, and his followers, were influenced to adopt the name Christian by Rev. Rice Haggard.

Rev. John Allen is another whom the writers of the time mention. He was nicknamed “Boanerges,” and

"Camp Meeting John Allen." He had labored in 376 camp meetings; was converted in his first, and bore the name of a mighty preacher. We think it was he that gave an account of Mr. O'Kelly's work for the year 1778 in the *Arminian Magazine*, of London, in 1792, already quoted. Methodist historians say that Mr. Allen left Virginia soon after 1792, retired to Maine, where later he entered upon the practice of medicine. This must have been a mistake, as he was at the General Meeting at Union Meeting House, Alamance County, North Carolina, in 1828, and was assigned to the Staunton River Circuit, and was also at the General Meeting at Old Lebanon, Surry County, Virginia, in 1832, though then an old man.

Rev. John Robertson withdrew from the Conference of 1792 with Mr. O'Kelly, became a local preacher in the Republican Methodist Church, but did not adopt the name Christian at the Old Lebanon Conference of 1794, when the new body took that name. He, with Revs. Edward Almond, and Thomas Hardy, remained under the name "Republican Methodists" until that branch either became extinct or united with some other denomination. Chaney Chapel, one of their churches, was in existence in 1809, and was visited by Rev. Joseph Thomas.

These three are mentioned by all Methodist Historians of the time, but the early Christian writers say that there were about thirty ministers who withdrew with Rev. James O'Kelly from the Baltimore Conference, and joined in organizing the Christian Church. The following are some of the number:

Rev. Burwell Barrett, of Southampton County, Virginia, began to preach as a Methodist about 1790, but in 1794 Rev. James O'Kelly came through his section on a preaching tour, and he joined the Christians in protesting against episcopacy. Thus we see he was in the Christian Church at its beginning, and always stood firm and supported the principles for which it stands. He labored mostly in Southampton and Sussex counties, Virginia. He was the organizer of Spring Hill, and Barrett's churches. He is spoken of by Rev. Joseph Thomas as a good man, a practical preacher, and as living the gospel he professed. For many years before his death he was looked upon as authority in church matters by those of his own denomination, and he took part in the organization of the Eastern Virginia Christian Conference in 1818.

Rev. Mills Barrett, son of Rev. Burwell Barrett, was another leader in his day, and joined the Christians in 1808. He began to travel as companion of Rev. Joseph Thomas, and made trips through many parts of Virginia and North Carolina. He soon became a powerful revivalist. He was present at the General Meeting of 1810, held with the Virginia branch of the church, attended the Caroline County General Meeting in 1811, and preached at that meeting with zeal, and with profit to his hearers.

He was the first President of the Eastern Virginia Christian Conference, organized at Cypress Chapel, Nansemond County, Virginia. He was the author of a hymn book for the Christians, printed in Norfolk, Va. At the conference of 1840 at Antioch he was ap-

pointed one of the committee to represent his conference in a General Conference of the Christians. In 1844 he was an itinerant minister, to travel within the bounds of his conference. In 1847 he was a member of the Southern Christian Association, organized at Good Hope, Granville County, North Carolina. At the conference at Holy Neck, Nansemond County, his life was eulogized in a memorial in the following manner: "He entered the service of the church in the days of his boyhood, and in the infancy of the denomination, and was, therefore, one of the pioneer preachers, enduring much hardness, yet remaining faithful to his calling for more than half a century, and true to the end of his days, passing to the light of heaven above, just as the war storm had culminated."

Rev. Joseph Bland joined the Christians about 1800, and was an active minister for about fifty years. His labors were for the most part in North Carolina.

Rev. Henry Burger is said to have been one of the "seceders" in 1792, and was then a young man, as he was in active service to the year 1833.

Rev. Peter Culpeper, of Virginia, was prominent about 1800. In 1806 he published a pamphlet entitled *A Key to the Mystery of Godliness, or an answer to Mr. John West's Key to the Mystery of Iniquity, to which is added some remarks on an impartial view in behalf of the Christian Church below*. This was an able sermon. He joined the Christians shortly after they organized.

Rev. William Glendening, a Scotchman by birth, and a Methodist minister before the O'Kelly "secession,"

joined the new church and lived and died in Raleigh, North Carolina. He traveled in Virginia, North Carolina and Maryland. He built at his own expense a Christian church in Raleigh, where he preached and conducted the services in his own way. He was also a printer and publisher, as well as a merchant, and accumulated considerable wealth.*

Rev. Edward Dromgoole, who was born in Ireland, located after emigration to this country, in Philadelphia, was converted under the earliest Methodist preaching, and in 1774 became the leader of the first class ever organized in America, was in 1794 laboring in Virginia, and though he never changed his church relations, he was in sympathy with Mr. O'Kelly and his movement.†

Rev. John Gray, of Fairfax County, Virginia, was another of the early Christian ministers. In 1812 he made a preaching tour from Raleigh, North Carolina, to Columbia, South Carolina, and from there to Granby and on to Augusta, Georgia, and then went up into the northern part of the State and held a great many revivals and said that there was a wide door open in that State for preaching. In one of the towns he was almost put in prison for preaching the doctrines of a free church. It seems that this journey was made as a missionary tour, and shows how the early mission work of the Christians was done.

* At one time in his life his mind was impaired and he lived on a farm in Sussex County, Virginia.

† Drinkhouse's *History of the Methodist Reform and the Methodist Protestant Church*, Vol. 1, p. 208 and footnote.

Rev. William Guirey was one of the most talented preachers of the early Christian Church. He was born in 1773, and began preaching in 1792 or 1793, first as an Episcopal minister. He was a trial member of the Methodist Conference of 1795-6. About 1797 he joined the Christians, and was very prominent in the General Meetings up to 1810. When the division of 1810 occurred, on account of baptism, he led the immersion branch, and some say that he called that branch "The Independent Christian Baptist Church." He was the first member of the Christian Church who had done foreign mission work, having traveled and preached in the town of Montego Bay, on the island of Jamaica, in 1794. For this he was placed in a loathsome dungeon, and finally was transported to the United States. After he united with the Christian Church, he traveled from Philadelphia to the southern frontier of Georgia, preaching the Word. In 1811 he lived near Chilesburg, Va. He wrote several pamphlets and books. *The History of The Episcopacy*, of 381 pages, is to this day regarded as a valuable work and good authority. Elsewhere we will see the cause of his separation from Mr. O'Kelly and the effusion branch of the Christians.

Rev. Richard Gunter was brought up in the Baptist Church, but, being opposed to "close communion," left that Church and joined the Christians about 1800. He belonged to the North Carolina Conference, lived near Rev. James O'Kelly, and labored in the new church for about thirty years.

Rev. Mr. Hafferty, of North Carolina, is said to

have first suggested the platform, "The Bible alone for the Rule of Faith and Practice," which was adopted by the Christians in 1794.

Rev. John Hayes, of North Carolina, began preaching among the Methodists. He was present at the Baltimore Conference, and withdrew with Mr. O'Kelly, and it is likely that he was one of those who took the twelve-mile walk "to where they had left their horses." He labored in the North Carolina Conference after its formation.

Rev. T. Morris was an aged man in 1810, and it is likely that he was among the ministers who left the Methodists with Mr. O'Kelly in 1792.

Rev. Clement Nance began to preach among the Methodists of Virginia in 1782, but joined the Christians in 1793, or soon thereafter, and cooperated with O'Kelly, Hackett, Moore, Pendleton, and others in Virginia for about twelve years; then he moved to Kentucky, and joined the Christians there; later he removed to Indiana and became a member of the Indiana Central Conference. When he left Virginia there were Christian churches in Caroline, Halifax, Orange, Amelia, Fairfax, and other counties that could ill afford to lose his services.

Rev. Abel Olive, of North Carolina, was a contemporary of Rev. James O'Kelly. He organized Catawba Springs church in 1803, and moved West in 1807, and continued to preach among the Christians.

Rev. Benjamin Rainey, who lived in what is now Alamance County, North Carolina, was also a co-worker with James O'Kelly from the secession of 1793. He

was the author of *Episcopacy Unmasked*, and a *Pamphlet in Vindication of the Christian Doctrine*. He was regarded as an able exponent of the Christian doctrine, and his Bible, with his texts marked, was in existence in 1906.

Rev. Benjamin Reeves, of North Carolina, began to preach late in life, and was an aged minister in 1800.

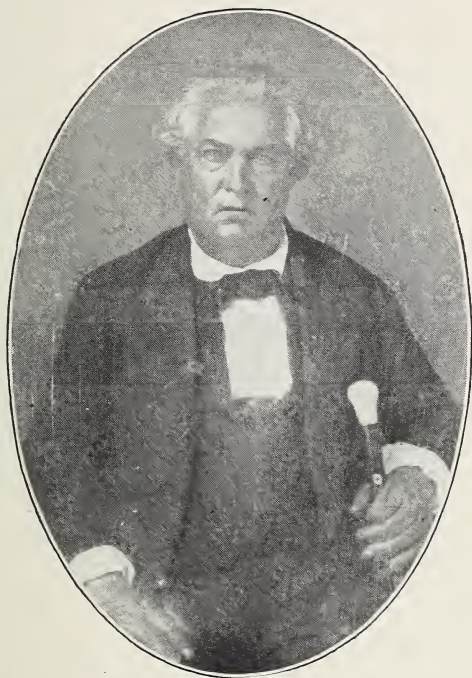
Rev. James Haw (or Howe) was one of the first Methodist missionaries to Kentucky, going there in 1784. After the secession of Mr. O'Kelly he joined the Christians and spent the major part of his life as a minister in that denomination. When he withdrew from the Methodists in Kentucky he won over, with one exception, all the Methodist preachers in his county, thus showing that he was a man of great influence.

Rev. James Jackson, of Cumberland County, North Carolina, was among those who seceded from the Methodists in 1792.

Rev. Benjamin Jones joined the Christians before 1800.

Rev. D. W. Kerr, the first editor of the *Christian Sun*, was a companion of Mr. O'Kelly in his later years. He was converted in 1818, and began to preach in 1819. He organized the Wake Forest Pleasant Grove Academy, twelve miles north of Raleigh. Twelve years later he was principal of Junto Academy. He was the man who stood for education in his day, and he now rests in the cemetery at Union, Alamance County, North Carolina.

Rev. William Lanphier, apparently a man of some



REV. DANIEL W. KERR
Founder and First Editor of *The Christian Sun*,
1841-1850.

means, who wrote to the *Herald of Gospel Liberty* in 1808-9, giving an account of the spreading of the Gospel in northern Virginia and elsewhere, was one of the early Christian ministers of his State. He lived and labored around Alexandria, Virginia. He joined the Christians about 1796.

Rev. Thomas Reeves, who lived in Orange County, North Carolina, and traveled with Rev. James O'Kelly after the secession, and who was for some time the senior companion of Rev. Joseph Thomas (White Pilgrim), itinerating in the South, was very likely among the Christians from their organization in 1794. In 1807 he traveled the Surry County (Virginia) circuit. He was a very prominent preacher in his day in North Carolina and Virginia.

Rev. Benjamin Rose may have been among the Christians in 1794.

Rev. Nathaniel P. Tatem, of Norfolk County, Virginia, was a prominent physician and minister in the early days of the Christian Church. He may justly be considered the father of the Christian Church in Norfolk and surrounding places. "He contended for the doctrine when there was but one other to be with him in the great work." He brought out the second edition of the *Christian Hymn Book* by Mills Barrett.

Rev. Joseph Thomas, born in what is now Alamance County, North Carolina, and known as the "White Pilgrim," was one of the early Christian ministers, joining in 1807, and was baptized by Rev. James O'Kelly at the General Meeting that year. He was a traveling evangelist, and visited most of the Southern

churches, and many of those in the North and West, He was the author of a hymn book, an autobiography, and other publications. His remains rest in New Jersey.

Rev. James Warren was perhaps a Methodist minister before the secession of 1792, and left with Mr. O'Kelly. He labored principally in the middle counties of Virginia, but often traveled in North Carolina. His influence brought Rev. Joshua Livesay into the Christian ministry. He was also one who took part in organizing the Eastern Virginia Conference in 1818, and must have died soon after that date.

Rev. John West, of Virginia, was licensed a Methodist minister in 1790, but joined the Christians about 1794, and labored among them in Virginia until 1806. He was an author of some note, his publications being extensively read.

Rev. Francis Williamson, who was born in Southampton County, Virginia, but later moved to Hertford County, North Carolina, left the Methodists and joined the Christians and did good work in his day. He was a believer in immersion, and opposed Mr. O'Kelly's idea of sprinkling as the only mode of baptism. When he joined the Christians he built a church on his plantation and called it Bethel, and preached there himself. He was present when the Eastern Virginia Christian Conference was organized in 1818, but opposed the adoption of a written constitution in 1822, and withdrew and became an independent preacher.

Rev. William McKendree withdrew with Mr. O'Kelly in 1792 as we have seen, but he soon went back to the

Methodists, and afterward became a bishop in that denomination.

Rev. Daniel Whitley, of Isle of Wight County, Virginia, did not begin to preach as a Christian minister until 1821, although he had been a Methodist from his early life. His work was chiefly in Isle of Wight, Southampton and Nansemond counties, and he was active until 1843.

Rev. Etheldred Kitchen is said to have been at the "Old Lebanon" Conference in 1794, but we have not been able to find more in regard to his work.

Rev. T. Ray, of South Carolina, was a prominent minister in the Christian Church in 1809, and was a member of the conference that sent the first greetings to the brethren in the North.

Rev. Micajah Debruler, who spent the latter part of his life in what is now Alamance County, North Carolina, was one of the Methodist preachers who withdrew with Mr. O'Kelly and united his efforts with him in establishing the Christian Church and denomination.

Rev. Benjamin Ogden was a Methodist missionary to Kentucky, and came over to the Christians in the early days, and did valuable work in that new country.

Rev. William Dameron was, first, a Methodist traveling preacher, and in 1788 located, and, after the secession of 1792, became identified with the Christians.

Rev. William Moore began preaching as a Methodist, but soon located, and when Mr. O'Kelly seceded he identified himself with the Christians, and worked in Central Virginia and North Carolina for about fifteen years.

Rev. Joseph Hackett was ordained under the leadership of Mr. O'Kelly, and traveled in the middle counties of Virginia, and was in active service as late as 1805.

Rev. Daniel Stringer began preaching in 1790 as a Methodist, but located in 1794. After that date he joined Mr. O'Kelly and labored in North Carolina and Virginia, and may be put down as one of the founders of the Christian Church. He published in 1809 a *Pamphlet in Vindication of the Christian Doctrine*.

Rev. Joseph Hartley was not permitted to stand on his feet before the people of Maryland and preach, but stood on his knees and preached, and was imprisoned for this. Then he preached to the people through the grate of his cell, until it was said, "if we do not turn Hartley out he will convert the whole town." He was one who threw the whole weight of his influence to the Christian Church after 1792. He was a man of great zeal and power, of strong faith, and able to brook opposition of whatever kind.

Rev. Thomas Hardy united with the "Republican Methodists," and when the Christian name was taken by the body he still clung to the original name.

Rev. Edward Almond was a co-laborer with Rev. James O'Kelly. He was at the Charlotte County Conferences, and was one of the messengers appointed to take the petition from the Piney Grove Conference to Bishop Asbury, and received the famous reply quoted elsewhere. He never gave up the name "Republican Methodist," but remained with that branch.

Rev. Joshua Worley, of Virginia, was one of the

Methodists who seceded with Mr. O'Kelly, and helped to form the Christian Church.

Rev. David Haggard joined the Methodists in 1787, and served on the Banks, Anson and Halifax circuits, then went to Kentucky. He joined the Christians about 1793, and spent some years preaching in Virginia and North Carolina, and then went again to Kentucky, where he labored for many years, dying at an advanced age.

Rev. Adam Cloud was one of the Episcopal ministers who did not leave the colonies during the Revolution. While he was a Methodist minister the following was passed: "Order the said trustees to meet every half year and keep a register of their proceedings, and if there are any vacancies, choose new trustees for better security of the houses, let all the deeds be drawn in substance after that in the printed minutes." By these minutes all the preaching houses were conveyed to Rev. John Wesley. In the time of the war all British property was confiscated and became public property. The Methodists became alarmed, and to prevent the Americans from seizing their houses, destroyed all the deeds. Adam Cloud was present when several deeds were destroyed. He ceased to travel in 1788, and became a Christian minister after 1792.

Revs. Coleman Pendleton and William Grimes, who labored in Virginia and North Carolina, were men who gave their influence to the establishment of the Christian Church.

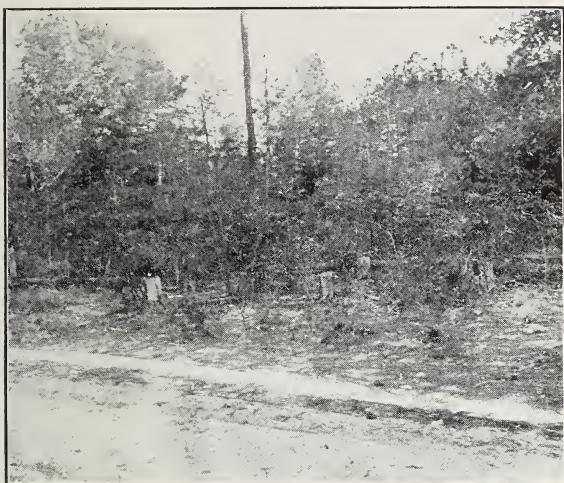
Rev. John Hanks, of Chatham County, North Carolina, was almost a neighbor to Rev. James O'Kelly,

and was doubtless well acquainted with him. He was an active minister up till 1839.

The ministers mentioned are those whose record we have been able to find, but it is likely the list is incomplete, for the names of about fifty only have been given, and it is certain that many of those did not join Mr. O'Kelly until after the Christian Church had been organized, and some very much after, while some of the early writers say that there were about thirty ministers who withdrew in 1792, and helped to organize the church.

It can be seen from the above that the burden of organization fell largely on Mr. O'Kelly, as some of his strongest colleagues soon left him and went back to the mother Church, or some other church, or attempted to organize separate branches of the church. Many who before had been traveling preachers became local, and traveling preachers were few. Rev. Rice Haggard remained firm, and was a most valuable helper. The Barrett family has never yet failed to have a man to stand in the Christian pulpit, for Rev. Burwell Barrett was with Mr. O'Kelly in 1793, his son Mills followed him, and his sons, Revs. S. S. and M. B. Barrett, followed the father and grandfather. In searching the records of Surry County, Virginia, we found that prior to 1793 the name was prominent among the ministers of that county. To-day we have several by that name who are occupying pulpits, while our first Southern white foreign missionary was a Barrett.

We are persuaded that not all whom we have mentioned were in attendance at the General Conference in Baltimore, and many of them were local preachers.



The spot on which stood Lebanon Church, where Rev. Rice Haggard made his famous motion "That henceforth and forever the followers of Christ be known as Christians simply." See page 116



NEW LEBANON CHURCH

Successor of the "Old Lebanon." Located near the old site,
Surry County, Va.

CHAPTER XI.

EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN EASTERN AND CENTRAL VIRGINIA, AND IN NORTH CAROLINA.

Let us now look at some of the churches that first came under the new name "Christian." One writer gives these as Barrett's, Antioch, Providence, Spring Hill, Old Lebanon, Holy Neck, Cypress Chapel, Union (Southampton), and Republican Chapel. It is likely that many of these were Episcopal chapels in the colonial days. We give sketches of some of these.

Old Lebanon is mentioned by Bishop Asbury in his "Journal" as a Methodist meeting house before the secession. After the conference of 1794 it seems to have been a prominent church for a long time. The North Carolina and Virginia Conference met there in 1832 and in 1839. Later the congregation grew weak, and finally identified itself with the Methodist Protestant people, who were numerous then in that section. A new Methodist Protestant church, named Oak Grove Chapel, was erected about five miles from the old site, and is to this day a flourishing church.

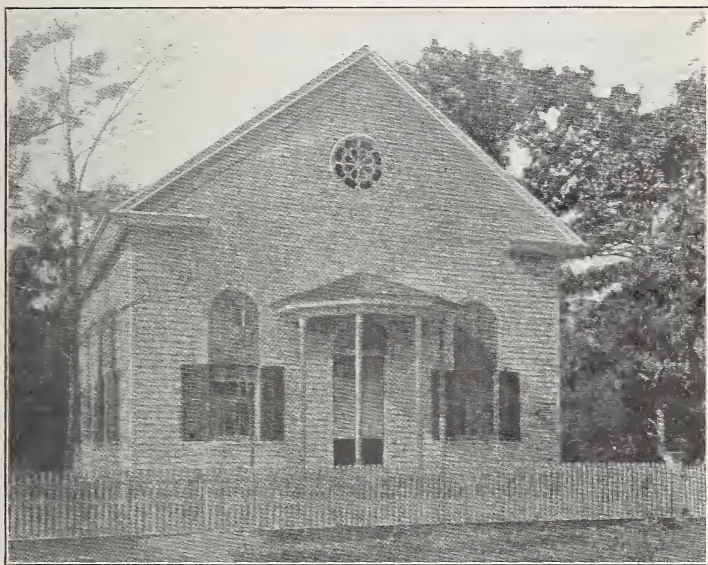
Among the prominent members in the early days was the Piland family, some of whose descendants are living at this time. Perhaps two women of this family were members of Old Lebanon when the church disbanded.

Another was the Berryman family, whose members are now connected with the Methodist Episcopal Church. Rev. R. W. Berryman was a member of Old Lebanon,

and lived in Surry County. He was a local preacher and had the reputation of marrying more couples than any other man who ever lived in the county. He is said to have been a very careful man in keeping records, and may have left a complete sketch of the old church.

The following ministers served the church in the early days: Revs. Lewis Craven, A. Apple, Solomon Apple, Alfred Isley, and Thomas J. Drumright, most of them coming from North Carolina. About the year 1842 the Christian organization was disbanded. In later years the house became dilapidated, and it was torn down and a new one erected some miles from where the old one stood. Much of the timber was used in the construction of a barn which is still standing. A Mr. Cockes was one of the main movers in this, and as relics for future generations he had a number of canes made from the timbers of the old house. These were first seen by the writer when he was a small boy at a conference at Antioch, in Isle of Wight County, Virginia, and as well as his memory serves him Mr. Cockes was selling these canes to help build the new house. One of these canes made from one of the old sills of the house was presented by Dr. J. P. Barrett to the American Christian Convention in session at Marion, Indiana, in 1890, to be kept by the president of that body, and to be delivered to his successor as the insignia of the presidential office. It is still used for that purpose.*

* From *The Origin and Principles of the Christian Church*, by Rev. J. F. Burnett.



HOLY NECK CHRISTIAN CHURCH, NANSEMOND COUNTY, VA.

Formerly an Episcopal Chapel. A Christian church organized there by Rev. James O'Kelly, about 1794-5. Has been noted for its loyalty and hospitality for one hundred years.

From the colonial records of Nansemond County, Virginia, we find that a chapel was ordered built at Holy Neck in 1747, and until this could be built the minister was to preach at Middle Chapel (somewhere near the present site of Liberty Spring church) and Somerton Chapel. This was an offspring of the parish church at Suffolk, Virginia. At first it was a small wooden house with a shed for the colored people, and when the Episcopal Church was disestablished in the State the house was not used and Rev. James O'Kelly, himself, planted a Christian congregation there in the early days of the denomination, perhaps before 1800.* Soon the house was enlarged. In 1835 a house 35 by 45 feet was built, and about fifty years later the present house was built. From this ancient church we learn a few things about the early doings of the Christians. No records were kept from 1800 to 1829, and historical data about those times is very scarce. Probably there were no settled pastors, but it was ministered to by local preachers, and occasional visits from traveling preachers, such as Revs. Nathaniel P. Tatem, Francis Williamson, Burwell Barrett, and others. Rev. Joseph Thomas, "White Pilgrim," preached there in 1808.

Among the leading members of the early days may be mentioned David Rawles, Dempsy Jones, Andrew Jones, Jack Rawles, John Copeland, Amasa Holland, Peggy Rawles and Polly Jones. Revs. Uriah Rawles, Benjamin Bullock and Lewis Craven were among the early pastors. About 1825, when Rev. Uriah Rawles began to preach there, the church had about twenty-five

* From *Memoirs of Rev. Isaac N. Walter*.

members. In 1821 Rev. Benjamin Bullock was the settled pastor, and Rev. Mills barrett was appointed to visit all the churches.

The church at Spring Hill, Sussex County, Virginia, was organized in the early days of the nineteenth century by Rev. Burwell Barrett, an associate of Rev. James O'Kelly. After Rev. Burwell Barrett's death the church gradually weakened until there was only one member remaining, Francis Clary. Then the church building was used for many years by the Methodist Protestants, who were then numerous in that section. In the year 1849 it seems that the sentiment for a Christian Church had again been aroused in the community, and Rev. M. B. Barrett, grandson of Rev. Burwell Barrett, went to the records of Sussex County, and found that the church house and lot were the property of the Christian church. The first deed was never recorded but was lost, and the only way this was known is, that, when the original owners sold the adjoining property, they reserved the meeting house lot, which had been deeded to the "Barrett Society." A second deed was obtained from the heirs since the present house was built.

In 1850 Rev. M. B. Barrett, with the assistance of Rev. J. I. Hobby, reorganized the church with the following charter members: John T. Harris, Benjamin T. Harris, Henry T. West, Richard C. West, Benjamin Barrett, Stephen Chapel, James G. Harris, Lucy Barrett, L. A. V. Barrett, Hester J. West, Angelina Harris, Francis Clary, and Patsy West. Francis Clary was the only member who was likewise a member of the first organization.

Rev. M. B. Barrett became the pastor, followed by Revs. R. H. Holland, W. H. Boykin, and Thomas Barham. During the Civil War Rev. W. B. Wellons preached there a part of the time. In 1865 Rev. M. B. Barrett again became pastor and remained pastor until 1871. The records of the church are imperfect up to 1869, but since that time they are complete. Since 1869 the following have been pastors: Revs. J. T. Whitley, J. P. Barrett, C. A. Apple, J. U. Newman, M. B. Barrett, R. E. Barrett, H. H. Butler, J. W. Barrett, M. W. Butler, Roger Charnock, J. W. Harrell, R. H. Peel, and H. E. Rountree.

This church has had a Sunday school all the while since 1869, and the first practical, systematic effort for raising home mission money in the Eastern Virginia Conference originated in a quarterly conference at this place, and the resolution is on the church record. It had the first Sunday school to run all the year round, and was the first to use maps and charts in this section, and to furnish conveyance to and from school on Sunday morning, for the children who did not have any. Its Sunday school attendance in 1870 averaged 90 per cent in the winter time.

We have given more than passing notice to this church for the reason that it has always been on the firing line, and the people have had to work very hard to overcome prejudices around it, and they have always been very active in the work of the denomination.

The church at Cypress Chapel was founded later than the one at Holy Neck. An Episcopal chapel was ordered there in 1758, the chapel to be built like the

one at Nottoway. The land for the chapel was given by a Mr. John Norfleet. This was also an outcome of the parish church at Suffolk, Virginia. We have no record as to whether or not Mr. O'Kelly planted the Christian Church at Cypress Chapel; however, it is likely that he did, since he preached there in 1780. When the house was abandoned by the Episcopalians it came into the possession of the new church some time about 1798.*

Antioch, in Isle of Wight County, Virginia, was an Episcopal chapel as early as 1719, sent out from the "Old Brick Church," St. Luke's, or, as it is now known, "Old Benn's Church," the oldest Protestant church in the United States. In the early days of the Christians Antioch was known as the "Old Chapel."† Mr. O'Kelly probably planted the Christian Church here. This section may have been the place referred to by Mr. O'Kelly in his *Apology*.

A sketch of Reese Chapel has already been given.

The history of those given is very likely that of many others also. Up until the year 1810 it is very likely that Mr. O'Kelly often visited these churches and preached for them. From the list given above, and perhaps from others, the Eastern Virginia Conference has grown until it is now the strongest body of the Christians in the South.

The thoughtful reader has perhaps wondered why so many of the Episcopal chapels were taken by the

* The first regular session of the Southern General Convention met here in 1858.

† From Col. E. M. Morrison, Official Historian of the county.



CYPRESS CHAPEL CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Nansemond County, Va., where Rev. James O'Kelly met Bishop Asbury, and the bishop records the fact in his "Journal." Formerly an Episcopal Chapel, but has been used by the Christians for more than one hundred years.



Christians. It came about in this manner: Before the Revolutionary War these houses and sites were the property of the English government, and when the treaty of peace between England and Virginia was signed they became the property of the Commonwealth of Virginia by confiscation.

The Church and the State were separated in 1786, and the State had no use to which it could apply these houses and sites. From the year 1781 to the year 1802 there was a continual discussion in the Virginia Legislature as to what disposition should be made of the Episcopal chapels throughout the State. The Episcopal denomination wanted these to remain the property of the Episcopalians, but the feeling of the people was so bitter against everything that had the English stamp upon it, that they were not willing that this denomination should have them. Finally, in 1802, an act was passed by the General Assembly that the overseers of the poor in each county should sell these old sites, as soon as they were vacated by existing incumbents, excepting those that had been made by private donation prior to 1777; and the proceeds were to be appropriated to the support of the poor in the counties.

This was an easy act to pass, but when they tried to dispose of the sites it was a more difficult proposition, for to each site belonged a graveyard, and no one wanted to buy a public graveyard. For this reason they were not sold as readily as was at first supposed, and thus they remained common property, the State not being able to use them, and no one else wanting

them, except for public gatherings. In the course of a few years the different denominations of the State began to use those that they wished, and as the Christians had spread in the eastern section of Virginia, the three chapels mentioned, and perhaps others, began to be used by the Christian ministers as preaching places, and they soon organized churches. They took possession by a common right which has never been disputed, and soon strong churches were planted at the three places mentioned.

The churches at Barrett's and Union, Southampton County, Virginia, were perhaps founded by Rev. James O'Kelly, and were ministered to by Rev. Burwell Barrett and others. The Eastern Virginia Conference met at Union in 1822 in the spring of the year, as there were two conferences held each year—one in the fall and one in the spring. The fall conference met at Republican Chapel in November, 1821, the minutes of which are preserved.

Providence, Norfolk County, Virginia, was organized in 1804, with Rev. Nathaniel P. Tatem as pastor. In 1819 the Eastern Virginia Conference met there.

In central Virginia, and the adjoining counties of North Carolina, we find the names of the following churches: Bethel,* Pleasant Grove, Halifax County. Pleasant Springs, (Now Catawba Springs), Shallow Well, O'Kelly's Chapel, Pope's Chapel, in what is now Franklin County, Old Kedar, (now Mt. Auburn), and some churches in Mecklenburg County, Virginia. From these have grown one or two strong conferences.

* Some seem to think this church came from the Baptists.

In the days of Mr. O'Kelly the territory of the Christians in the South was much larger than it is to-day. There were many churches in Northern Virginia. There was a large society of the "Republican Methodists," or Christians, near Mount Vernon in his day. We are led to believe that there were some societies or churches near Winchester, Virginia. There were many churches north and east of Richmond, that have since become extinct. Mr. O'Kelly made preaching tours to these sections, and often remained away from home for months, as the means of travel were very slow and tedious in those days.

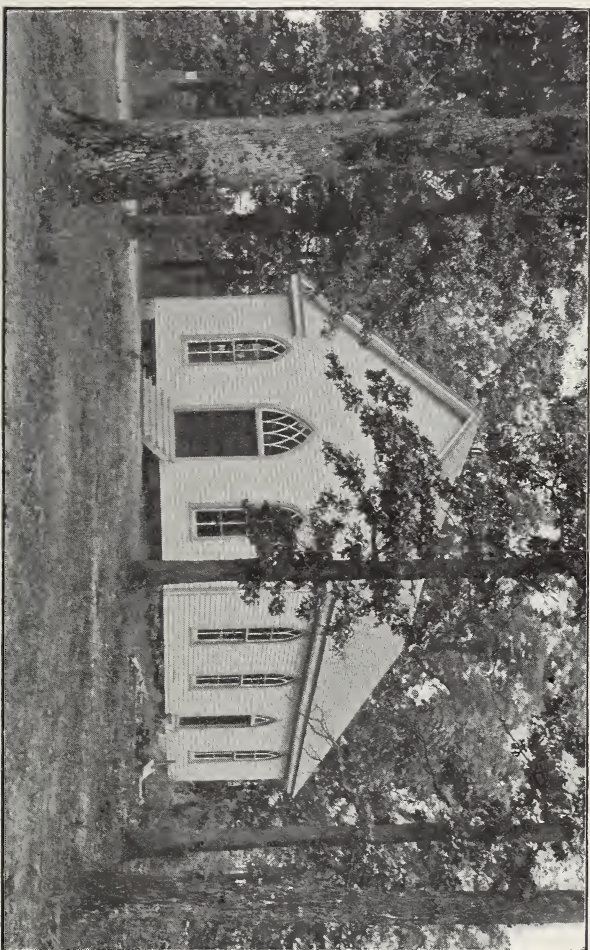
Rev. William Guirey, in Volume I, page 43, of the *Herald of Gospel Liberty*, gives the following information in regard to the number of communicants and the territorial limits of the Christians in 1808:

"In the year 1792 several hundred persons withdrew from the Methodist Church in consequence of their objections to the Episcopal form of government. The causes of the separation I have minutely related in a work entitled *The History of Episcopacy*, containing 381 pages.

"After we became a separate people, three points were determined upon. 1st. No head over the Church but Christ; 2d. No confession of faith, articles of religion, rubric, canons, creeds, etc., but the New Testament; 3d. No religious name but Christians. For several years I have been a minister in this church and have traveled among the brethren from Philadelphia to the southern frontier of Georgia. We have members in every State south of the Potomac, also a few churches

in Pennsylvania; from the best information I can obtain I suppose there are about 20,000 people in the Southern and Western States who call themselves by the Christian name. Our sentiments on doctrinal points have been sufficiently explained in a pamphlet entitled *An Apology for Renouncing the Jurisdiction of the Synod of Kentucky, to Which Is Added a Compendious View of the Gospel, Etc.* Those persons who are the authors of this pamphlet have since their separation from the Presbyterians united with us. I believe on this, and every other subject, we are of one mind and of one heart, except it be the subject of baptism. Many of our brethren who were formerly Methodists or Presbyterians are in favor of infant baptism; while myself and several others are of a contrary opinion. I have thought proper to receive baptism by immersion on a profession of faith, and have since my baptism baptized three or four preachers; others fear Methodist reproach, etc. I make this communication that you may know how far we agree and how we differ in sentiment."

From this and other data at hand we can mark out the boundaries of the Christian Church in 1810 about as follows: Beginning at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, go to Pittsburg; thence through the settled portions of Ohio to the Mississippi River; thence down that stream to a point due west from the southern Georgia line; thence east to the Atlantic Ocean, and thence up the coast to New Bern, North Carolina; thence to Cape Henry; thence up the Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac River to the neighborhood of Washington, D. C., and thence to Philadelphia.



O'KELLY'S CHAPEL, CHATHAM COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA.
Organized in 1794. Not far distant from the O'Kelly Farm and Burial Place.

It seems that there were Christian churches in all the States mentioned, and in some sections they were very numerous.

It is likely that many of the Christian churches in North Carolina began under different circumstances from those in Virginia, most of them coming directly from the Methodists. From a sketch of Pope's Chapel we find that it was first a Wesleyan Society meeting house, and of course when the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1784 it became Methodist, and when the secession of 1792 took place it seceded with Mr. O'Kelly, and became a Christian church. It is more than likely that Mr. O'Kelly organized the Christian church at that place, and may have been the regular pastor for some time. He had preached there before the secession, and often he and Mr. Asbury had held meetings there together.

Some of the churches named returned to the Christians about the year 1854. For some years before this date they had been known as the Christian Baptists, having, as it is said, separated from the Baptists on account of close communion. It is the opinion of the writer from the best information at hand, that some of the Christian Baptist churches were originally with Mr. O'Kelly, and because of his views about baptism left him some time about 1810. Later they were joined by some churches and ministers from the Baptists, who separated from their mother Church on account of close communion, and in 1854 these all united with the Christians in a conference at O'Kelly's Chapel in Chatham County, North Carolina. The reason for as-

suming this position is: Pleasant Springs (now Catawba Springs) was organized in 1803, by Rev. Abel Olive, whose biographer mentions the fact that he was with Mr. O'Kelly in 1792. Rev. John Hayes, a Christian minister, was the second pastor, serving up to 1825, and he was followed by Rev. Littlejohn Utley, who served up to 1838. It was also visited in the early days by Revs. Joseph Thomas, "White Pilgrim," Mills Barrett, Gray, Williamson, Holloway, and others who were strictly Christian ministers. Yet this church is put down as coming to the Christians from the Christian Baptists in 1854. It seems from this that it was first a Christian Church, then joined the Christian Baptists, and then reunited with the Christians. In the early history of this Church we find that some of the Christian churches in North Carolina, preceding the year 1831, practiced baptism by immersion only, and rejected infant baptism. The sectarian literature, which the more conservative had seen, so prejudiced them that they refused, for several years, to even have their minutes printed. Others perhaps did the same thing; hence the scarcity of data for the historian. Sometimes when a General Meeting was held the last thing done was to read and approve the minutes of the session, and then burn them, so they would not have any precedent for the next General Meeting. In 1831 Pleasant Springs church held only one conference a year, and the principal business was the election of messengers to the annual conference. In the year mentioned this "church did choose as their messengers to the annual conference of the Christian con-

version in North Carolina who believe in, and practice baptism by immersion, Bros. Lewis Franks, John Utley and Anthony Franks." This is given to get a view of those days.

CHAPTER XII.

O'KELLY'S WORK IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

Thus far we have, in a way, traced the life and work of Rev. James O'Kelly as given by the historians of the Methodist Church, and by himself and others. We have tried to give a fair and impartial hearing to all the facts and circumstances as we have found the same recorded by different writers. What we were fully persuaded was true we have endorsed, and what we were not convinced was true we have tried to show was contradicted by plain facts which no thinking person would endeavor to gainsay. This course was thought to be best, so that the reader might get the various opinions as they have been written and read by several generations. In this way is seen, under how many difficulties our forefathers labored for religious freedom, as well as for civil liberty.

Again this has been done to show how Mr. O'Kelly, and his associates, were persecuted for the very truth's sake.* He was abused, he was condemned as a heretic,

* I have in my possession the writings of the Southern Christian ministers from 1808 to 1813 in the *Herald of Gospel Liberty*, and almost every minister mentions the persecutions that they passed through in Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, Ohio, Maryland and Pennsylvania. This was not done by one denomination alone, but by many, and sometimes they even went so far as to try to attempt to put the ministers in prison. Rev. William Guirey was imprisoned in a loathsome dungeon in Jamaica, and transported to the States, and later he fared almost as bad in Virginia. It seems that the persecutors thought that they were doing God's will in this matter.

and was offered hush money, yet he had the *manhood* to stand for what he believed to be right, and in the opinion of the world, and of the Church, he is to-day a far greater man than he was when he lived and walked on earth, and at this time it looks as if he and his influences will continue to grow as the years roll by. Who can tell but that the system of Church government, and the principles for which he and his associates contended in the Baltimore Conference, will be the ones upon which the Protestant world will yet unite, in order that the world may be won for Christ and made one in Christ? Many believe that this is the most logical platform for all the followers of Christ, and that the day will yet come when all will have to unite to combat the powers of evil in its multifarious forms.

Some have called the church he founded "O'Kelly-ites," after its organizer, instead of the Christian Church. For something like thirty-three years he labored faithfully to establish the Christian Church in the States of Virginia and North Carolina, and while he had many discouragements, and many difficulties were thrown in his way, he at last saw it well established in the minds and hearts of the people. In one of his last sermons he is said to have asserted that he firmly believed that the cause he had espoused would finally triumph. The history of the present proves that he was right in this belief.

Let us begin with the close of the Lebanon Conference of 1794, and trace his work, as best we can, from the meager records that have been left by the writers of the past. This is no easy task, for the history of

the early Christian Church was for various reasons poorly preserved.*

Rev. James O'Kelly began his autobiography, but it was not completed at the time of his death. During the war between the States this autobiography was in the possession of Dr. J. M. O'Kelly's father, and the house in which he lived was burned by the Union soldiers, and the manuscript was destroyed. Dr. O'Kelly, of Durham, North Carolina, who is a descendant, says that they now have no record of their noted ancestor. It is said that James O'Kelly had a great many manuscripts in his home at the time of his death, and no doubt they were valuable documents, but his wife had lived in the contention about church government so long, and had heard so much about it, that after his death she said she wanted peace from that question, and so she collected these manuscripts and put fire to them in order that further contention might be avoided. What a pity that so much valuable information, for the future historian, should have been destroyed to accomplish so small an end! Yet such was the case, and perhaps many others have done things of this sort, not thinking what a valuable legacy for the future was being destroyed.

From the best information that we have been able to collect, the records of the early General Meetings of the Christians were not preserved, and they have long since been forgotten, as those who were on the scene of action at that time have gone to give an ac-

* Often the minutes of the General Meetings, as previously stated, were burned before the adjournment.

count of their stewardship, before the great Court of Heaven, and their knowledge has been buried with them. What is known is something like tradition, and has been handed down from generation to generation, and we do not doubt but that much has been omitted, and perhaps much added. But much is plausible and feasible. This we give, hoping that it will help to bring some order from chaos, and that at some future day, a more authentic record will be collected, and given to the reading public.

From the date of their organization at "Old Lebanon," in Surry County, Virginia, it is said that the Christians met each year in a deliberative capacity, and for years these meetings were called "General Meetings," and later, "Union Meetings." Up to the year 1810 it seems that all the Christians, south of the Potomac River, and east of the Alleghany Mountains, held one General Meeting per year. We have been able to locate but few of these meetings. Shortly after the Lebanon Conference, some of the preachers became dissatisfied with the name Christian Church, fearing that they might be understood by that name to condemn other denominations. "They reasoned thus," says one: "'If we are the Christian Church it will imply that there are no Christians but our party.' Some of their party protested against the name of the denomination, and four of their preachers broke off from the new plan, and united on a plan of their own in Charlotte County, Virginia."* Rev. John Robinson was the leader of this movement, and they again as-

* Jesse Lee's History, p. 206.

sumed the name "Republican Methodists." This must have happened at the next meeting after the Lebanon Conference, as all seemed to be agreed there that this was the proper name.

There was a General Meeting held at Shiloh, Pittsylvania County, Virginia, in 1801, but the minutes are not to be found. This year Rev. James O'Kelly made a preaching tour of Nottoway County, Virginia, and at one of his appointments Rev. Thomas E. Jeter was converted.

The General Meeting of 1805 was held at Shiloh, on the line of Pittsylvania and Halifax counties, and Mr. O'Kelly was in attendance. Rev. Thomas E. Jeter was ordained at this time by Revs. James O'Kelly, Clement Nance, Joseph Hackett, William Moore, and Coleman Pendleton.

The next meeting that we have been able to locate was held at Raleigh, North Carolina, in 1807, and Rev. James O'Kelly attended and there baptized Rev. Joseph Thomas, "White Pilgrim," who had been converted at Hawfields, N. C., in 1806. After being baptized by pouring, young Thomas was licensed to preach by Mr. O'Kelly.*

In 1808 the General Meeting was held at the same place, but we have no record as to what was done.

In 1809 the General Meeting was held at Shiloh, Halifax County, Virginia, and Rev. Joseph Thomas says that there were thirteen preachers in attendance. We know only one thing that was done at this meeting, and that is contained in a letter to the *Herald of*

* Prof. Humphrey's Memoirs of Deceased Christian Ministers, under "Joseph Thomas."

Gospel Liberty, dated May, 1809. The brethren in the South had just heard of the Christians in New England, and so they sent a letter of greeting to the New England brethren. In this letter they stated their position and what they had heard was the position of the northern brethren, and asked their prayers, and expressed thanks that there were others of the same mind as they were.

This was answered by a like letter from the brethren in New England, assembled in conference in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on June 23, 1809. In this they stated their position more fully, and were glad to learn that there were those in the South who, like themselves had rejected all creeds but the Bible. These two letters led to the union of the churches in 1811, as we shall shortly see.

In 1810 there was a General Meeting held by the Christians at Pine Stake.* Another General Meeting was held at Apple's Chapel, Guilford County, North Carolina, the same year. At the meeting at Pine Stake, which was in all probability held first, there was a serious question raised, and one that was not settled for a great many years. Rev. William Guirey, who joined the Christians some years before that time, had changed his position on the subject of water baptism. When he joined the Christians it seems that they were all believers in infant baptism, and sprinkling, or pouring, for adults. When he began to look into the subject he felt convinced that that was not the Bible

* Some hold that this church was in North Carolina, and others think it was in Orange County, Virginia. The latter seems to be the more authentic.

method of baptism, and so he was immersed, as were two or three other Christian ministers, and this brought a difference into the body. Guirey and his fellow immersionists were not willing to give over their position in regard to the ordinance, and Mr. O'Kelly and his fellow effusionists were not willing to give up their position, and so a debate was begun to try to settle the matter. In the heat of this discussion Mr. O'Kelly is said to have asked William Guirey: "Who rules this body, you or I?" The quick response was: "Neither of us, brother; Christ rules here."

After the discussion had gone on until it could not be settled they decided to separate on account of their baptismal differences. Rev. William Guirey set up under the name of the "Independent Christian Baptist Church," and it seems that the majority of the Christian churches in Virginia joined him, and they organized what might be called a Virginia Conference, and held meetings of their own for some years, but for some reason, unknown to the writer, they seem to have been discontinued before the years 1818.*

Mr. O'Kelly and his associates left the Pine Stake General Meeting and went home and organized the "Old North Carolina Conference," while the discussions mentioned above called forth his pamphlet on baptism. The proceedings of the "Old North Carolina Conference," up to the year 1828, have not been found.

* After the division of 1810 the churches and the members who remained with the O'Kelly branch of the church were very often called "O'Kellyites," and the others were called Christians, for some years. It was not until 1854 that they all united again under the one name Christian.

Not all the Christians in North Carolina, however, joined this conference, for there were those who did not believe in baptism by effusion, and they held no fellowship with any one who did not believe in baptism by immersion. In choosing their delegates to the General Meetings or Conferences they had it specially stated that they were only to meet with those who believed in and practiced baptism by immersion only. Later these were joined by some Baptists who had left that connection on account of close communion, and they were known as the Christian Baptists up to the year 1854.

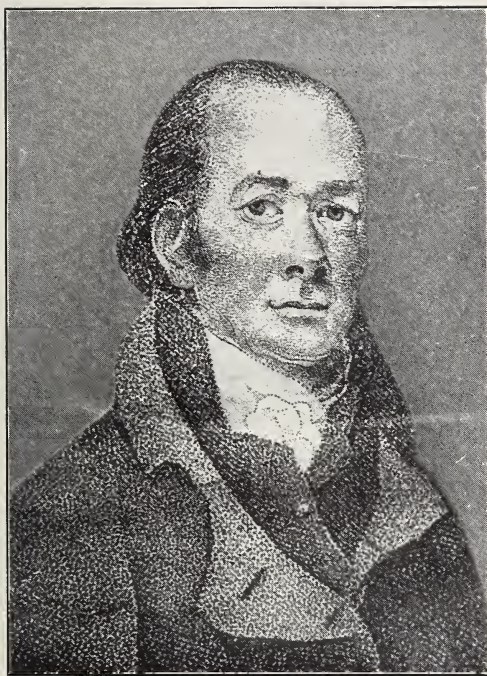
It would appear that Mr. O'Kelly called the General Meeting at Apple's Chapel, after the meeting at Pine Stake, and there were only those present who believed in sprinkling, or pouring, as the Bible mode of baptism.*

* With this baptismal difference the two branches seem to have gone on until 1847. There were no signs of a reunion in James O'Kelly's day. There was no central object in view for the brotherhood. The churches in the Valley of Virginia seemed to be dying slowly, and Alexander Campbell began to extend his influence into Virginia north of the James river, and many of the Christian churches joined him. It was a constant disintegration until the North Carolina and Virginia Conference began to publish a religious newspaper, the *Christian Sun*. It took eleven years for the first issue to be printed after the matter began to be agitated. But as soon as the publication was commenced, it became the standard around which the disorganized branches began to unite, and in a few years the whole membership in the South was organized for work. The day the Christians South placed some fixed object before them marks the beginning of their progress. The first thing undertaken was the *Christian Sun*; the second, Graham College; the third, Elon College, and last, the Christian Orphanage. Each one of these institutions marks a step in the progress of the denomination.

The first Friday in October, 1811, there was a General Meeting held in Caroline County, Virginia, William Guirey's home county, and the following among others were present: Joseph Thomas, who had been baptized by immersion, Mills Barrett, and Zachariah Holloway. From this we get an idea that most of the churches in Virginia were represented in this gathering. Among the visitors from a distance present were Rev. Elias Smith, editor of the *Herald of Gospel Liberty*, who has left us an account of the meeting, and Elder Hays, perhaps from South Carolina. According to Rev. Joseph Thomas there were four other preachers present besides those mentioned. As we have not been able to learn much of the nature of these meetings we give Rev. Elias Smith's account as follows:

"The meeting was holden at a meeting house in Caroline County, formerly built for the Methodists, but the people who built it having renounced Methodism, root and branch—bishop, discipline, sprinkling, pouring, and all other inventions called *baptism*—and having received Christ for their bishop, and the New Testament for their law, and being baptized according to the New Testament, they still retain their meeting house, it not being deeded to the Methodists, as I am informed.

"Several of the Elders and Brethren met on Friday, at 10 o'clock, according to appointment; a sermon was delivered by Bro. Hays, and another by Bro. E. Smith. In the evening two discourses were delivered; after preaching, there were several prayers and exhortations, with singing; all being conducted in the same manner such meetings are in New England.



REV. ELIAS SMITH

Founder and First Editor of *The Herald of Gospel Liberty*,
1808, the Oldest Religious Newspaper in the World.



“The meeting continued until after 10 o’clock, without any confusion; the preachers preached in the spirit; and the brethren heard them with joy, and the whole assembly which was large, appeared with a solemnity, which proved that they were convinced that the preachers were not following cunningly devised *fables*.

“On Saturday morning at 10 o’clock, the people met again, the assembly was much larger than the day before, and all appeared desirous to hear. About five sermons were delivered in the course of the day and evening.

“Lord’s day, the people met at 10 o’clock; the house was much too small for the people—seats were made back of the house, and the pulpit window being open, the people were well accommodated with seats and the privilege of hearing; there was constant preaching, singing and praying until toward night, when the people retired for refreshments. Met again in the evening, at which time two discourses were delivered, with many exhortations and prayers for those who felt their need of a part and lot in this matter.

“Monday morning, the preachers met together in an upper chamber, in order to attend to the important question so often asked—‘Can the Christian Brethren of the South unite with the Christian Brethren in the North?’ This question had been frequently asked in the South, and by many answered in the negative.

“Some at the beginning of this meeting concluded that on account of Baptism, an union could not take place, though they wished it might. After some conversation upon the subject one of the Elders observed,

that an Elder from the North was present (E. Smith); that he was in fellowship with the other Elders and Brethren in New England; that it was the desire of the Brethren in Philadelphia, and many in New England, that he should meet with the Brethren here, and that it was his and their desire that a general union should take place through the whole; that the walls should be joined. He observed that his mind was entirely free, and wished that all who felt free to receive him as a brother, a member with them, and a fellow-laborer, would manifest it by giving him the right hand of fellowship. He began, and each one did the same without hesitation, all agreeing to exalt Christ, to preach him as the only way, to obey his commands as far as understood, and teach others also. This was truly solemn, joyful, and glorious; God was among us of a truth. After making the necessary arrangements for traveling and preaching among the people in different parts, we all met at the meeting house at 11 o'clock, where a large number had collected to attend the last meeting to be holden at that time and perhaps on earth.

"Every circumstance united to make this meeting important. A discourse was delivered on the death of a sister of that church, who had died a few days before; the Elders and Brethren who had met from hundreds of miles were to part from that meeting; preachers who before this had been strangers to each other, had become acquainted and united in heart, had given each other the hand of fellowship to go their ways to preach the same Saviour. Add to all

this, a great company of brethren and sisters, who had come many miles to hear, and whose souls had been refreshed by the joyful sound, who now stood around us, melted in tears, at the thought of parting, a crowded and weeping congregation, who had heard the Word, and knew they were not sharers in the joy; add to this the poor slaves who had leave from their masters to attend, who appeared many of them to share in the consolation, which was manifested by their tears, the smile on their countenances, and the songs of praise they uttered; and with all this, the firm belief that we should ere long meet no more to part; all these things made the last of the meeting truly glorious, so that the best wine was kept for the last of the feast. After singing many farewell hymns, with exhortations and prayers, and giving each other the parting hand, we separated, to go our different ways to proclaim the Gospel of grace, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles, and endeavoring to cause joy among all who love our Lord Jesus, both theirs and ours.

“There were at this meeting about thirteen or fourteen preachers, and fifteen sermons were preached; seven by Elias Smith, and eight by the other preachers. Two Baptist ministers attended.”*

* After giving an account of what was done at the General Meeting of 1811 in Caroline County, Virginia, Rev. Elias Smith gives a view of life in that part of Virginia at that time. Under date of October 25, 1811, he writes:

“I can not feel clear in closing this account, without adding a few words on the state of the people in Virginia, etc., etc., which will (I doubt not) be acceptable to our brethren in the other

Taking up the thread of history at the Caroline County General Meeting, where there was an union with the Northern brethren, we have very little authentic history for some years.

parts of the United States. In Virginia the people generally live at a distance from each other on large plantations. They are one, two, three and four miles apart in many places. On each plantation are many slaves—who are the property of their masters. In every place where I visited, the slaves appeared to me to be in a more comfortable situation than many who have the name of being free, being in general well fed and comfortably clothed.

“Many of the people who are very rich appear to be as humble followers of Jesus as I ever saw. The brethren where we met, appeared to receive the preachers and others with their whole hearts, and made it their whole business to attend the meetings every day. I was never more happy with brethren than with those in Virginia. The people in general were remarkably decent in their behavior, not only at the General Meeting, but at all the meetings I attended.

“The situation of the people in Virginia is very singular—once they were under Episcopalian priests, but when the priestly law was repealed, all the clergy were out of employ; not being upheld by God nor man. Their salary was sixteen thousand weight of tobacco per year. It must be a large, hungry tobacco worm to want so much annually. They being dismissed, the houses called churches, stand empty, and free for any to preach in, and it is with the people there as with Naphtali, ‘an hind let loose he giveth goodly words,’ while multitudes in New England are like Issachar, ‘a strong ass crouching down between two burdens.’ There is at this time a great door opening for preaching, particularly in Alexandria, in Fairfax County, Shenandoah County, and in many other places.

“Should any of our New England brethren visit Virginia, who love to preach, they will find such a door open for preaching as they never saw.

“To conclude: In my visit to Virginia I rode 1,600 miles in four weeks, and preached about thirty times.”

In 1815 the Virginia Christians were represented in the United States General Convention which met at Wyndham, Connecticut.

The first regular session of the Eastern Virginia Conference was held at Cypress Chapel in Nansemond County, Virginia, on September 25, 1818. Among the ministers who composed this conference the names of Burwell Barrett, Joshua Livesay, John Livesay, Mills Barrett, James Warren, Francis Williamson, Nathaniel P. Tatem, and Nelson Millar appear. Of the laymen the following among other names are recorded: Thomas Holloway, Abraham Harrell, Stephen Smith, Herod Burt, and John Copeland. We may naturally suppose that these were representative members of the body at that time, and many of their descendants are prominent in the Christian pulpit and pew today. The next meeting of the body was held at Holy Neck in the same county on the 25th, 26th and 27th of May, 1819. At this gathering the body took the name of the (Eastern) Virginia Christian Conference. Rev. Mills Barrett was the presiding officer, and Rev. Nelson Miller was secretary. We are not informed at this time whether Mr. O'Kelly was at these meetings, but on account of the division of 1810 it seems a little doubtful about his being there.

From the date given above we have been able to find but little of what was done until the year 1821. The seventh session of the (Eastern) Virginia Christian Conference was held at Republican Chapel (location unknown), on November 9th, 10th, and 11th, 1821.

From this we learn that the first session of the body was held at Cypress Chapel, the second at Holy Neck, then in the interim conferences were held at Republican Chapel, Providence, (Norfolk County), Barrett's in Southampton County, one unknown, and the seventh at Republican Chapel, the eighth at Union in Southampton County, on Friday before the second Sunday in June, 1822. We see from this that two meetings were held each year, one in the spring and one in the fall.

The following Elders were present at the session of 1821: Burwell Barrett, Daniel Whitley, Nelson Millar, Nathaniel P. Tatem, Joshua Livesay, Benjamin Bullock, John Livesay, Francis Williamson and Mills Barrett. Members present: Albridgeton Harvey, Sr., Thomas Holloway, Anthony Evans, Elijah Williamson, Albridgeton Harvey, Jr., Mills Holland, Lazarus Holloway, Nichols Duel, Thomas Cutchins, Amos Everett Wrench, Francis Costen, Thomas Collins, Samuel Newman, and Henry Gray.

At this conference a committee was appointed to revise the plan drawn up at the last session of the conference held at Republican Chapel for the organization of the Christian churches. The committee was composed of Elders Francis Williamson, Daniel Whitley and John Livesay, and members Albridgeton Harvey, Sr., and Elijah Williamson. This is the first attempt at organization that we have been able to locate in the Christian Churches South.

A large part of the time was taken up in disposing of charges against Rev. Joseph Thomas, who was ex-

pelled from this conference. They approved of the proceedings of the General Meeting held in New Bedford, and Nelson Millar was appointed to attend the next General Meeting, and he was given the liberty to put in his application for the place in which it should be held.

After the plan for organization had been revised it was ordered to be published in the *Christian Herald*.

The North Carolina and Virginia Conference was organized in 1825, and it is likely that Mr. O'Kelly was there, as it was near his home. The Deep River Conference was organized in 1864; the Georgia and Alabama Conference in 1854. The Southern Christian Association was organized at Good Hope, Granville County, North Carolina, in 1847. The Southern General Convention was organized at Union, Alamance County, North Carolina, in 1856. The General Convention of the Christian Church, South, was organized at Mount Auburn, Warren County, North Carolina, in 1866.

It is doubtful if Mr. O'Kelly and his associates ever had anything to do with the United States Conference; for from letters extant the members of his church seem to have lost all trace of the connection with the Northern brethren, for their leader in 1840 seemed to be ignorant that there were any Christians in the North.

They did formally unite with the brotherhood North for work in 1841, but it was of very short duration, for in 1844 the question of slavery was becoming so agitated that the union was broken off, and so the union with this branch only lasted three years.

The reader will pardon the writer for giving an outline of Church history in this way, but it was thought that it would throw some light on the events of the past.*

* The churches in the Valley of Virginia seemed to become separated from the other branches about the year 1828, and held a conference of their own, and they were on fraternal terms with the Virginia brethren, and also with those in the North, but they seemed to be firmly united with neither.

CHAPTER XIII.

SOME INCIDENTS IN O'KELLY'S LATER LIFE AND WORK—HIS PREACHING TOURS—HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH THOMAS JEFFERSON—PREACHES IN WASHINGTON, D. C.—HOW THOMAS JEFFERSON CAME TO BE KNOWN AS AN INFIDEL—O'KELLY'S LAST MEETING WITH BISHOP ASBURY—HIS OPEN DISCUSSIONS—HISTORICAL STATEMENTS OF 1809 AND 1829.

For a number of years, just prior to his death, Mr. O'Kelly lived in Chatham County, North Carolina; his name appearing in the records of the county as early as 1797. He was the owner of some property in that county, and there his family resided, but it seems that he was still a traveling preacher, and from the records of his contemporaries he did a great deal of preaching. Near his old homstead the first new Christian church in the South was organized in 1794. It was named O'Kelly's Chapel after its organizer. This was the same year the Lebanon Conference was held. Mr. O'Kelly began his work at home. How much better it would be for us if we began to do the work that is next to us, instead of trying to reach for something farther off! This church is about eight miles south of Durham, North Carolina.

Rev. James O'Kelly seems to have been a great missionary worker, and did a great deal of traveling in connection with his work. From a deed on record in Chatham County we find that he bought from one John Scott, one acre of land where the Martha's Chapel

church now stands, in 1803, and there the new denomination built a church. We give a sentence from this as showing how devout the fathers were. After describing the piece of land Scott says: "I say I do hereby give, grant and convey the said acre of land with all that appertaineth thereto on the said premises to the said O'Kelly and the Christian Church collectively for the particular purpose of erecting a meeting house to be occupied by way of preaching and explaining the Word of the Lord therein, together with any other part of divine services for the benefit of the settlement, according to the true intent and meaning of these presents."

It is said that O'Kelly's wife would see at times that he was restless, and she would say to him: "Go on and preach, I will attend to home." He would make tours of the early Christian churches, and often preach at private houses when there was no church convenient, and one writer adds that he would often preach for three hours at a time. Often times he would define his plan of Church government. He would start from his home and visit all the churches from there to Petersburg, Virginia; and all those east of that town and Richmond, on what is known as the "Southside" of Virginia, as the churches have always been somewhat numerous in that section. Occasionally he would go up in the mountains, and sometimes as far as Washington, D. C.

It is said that he was an intimate friend of Thomas Jefferson, and as Mr. Jefferson was the leader of Republican ideas in Virginia in politics, and Mr. O'Kelly

in religious thought, it is not strange that they should have been warm friends, and very congenial.

It is highly probable, from what occurred at a later period, that he visited Mr. Jefferson at Monticello on his preaching tours. The story goes thus:

“On one occasion Mr. O’Kelly visited Mr. Jefferson in Washington. The great statesman, knowing of the preacher’s ability, obtained the use of the hall of the House of Representatives and invited Mr. O’Kelly to preach. The invitation was, after some consideration, accepted, but to the chagrin of the distinguished host, the preacher fell far below Mr. Jefferson’s expectation. Believing this failure did his friend a great injustice, the great political leader insisted on a second effort. Mr. O’Kelly agreed. The appointment was again made, and the people urged to give him another hearing. They did hear him again, and were abundantly repaid, for Mr. O’Kelly preached one of the great sermons of his life, and the host was the most delighted man in the audience. When he had finished Mr. Jefferson arose with tears in his eyes, and said, that while he was no preacher, in his opinion James O’Kelly was one of the greatest preachers living.

“Mr. Jefferson’s friendship for Mr. O’Kelly was responsible for the charge that this eminent statesman was an infidel. To this day the facts are but little known to the public, but they are well authenticated. It is known that the charge was laid against Mr. Jefferson, but the cause and the injustice of the charge are little known. Mr. O’Kelly’s leadership in

the secession from the Methodist Episcopal Church had made for him many strong enemies, who called him an infidel because of his supposed unfaithfulness to his Church. His enemies pressed this charge against him without specifying its nature, till the impression gained credence that he was an infidel to the Christian faith.

“When Mr. Jefferson boldly showed his friendship for Mr. O’Kelly, it was construed by the enemies of the latter as sympathy for him in his work as a reformer, and at once Mr. Jefferson was charged with being an infidel. His political enemies began to proclaim the charge against him in their efforts to defeat him for the presidency, and in a short time the rumor was generally current among the people. So intense was the feeling thus engendered against him, that in some places, notably in Pennsylvania, the report was believed and it was talked among the people that if Mr. Jefferson should be elected President, he would order all Bibles to be burned throughout the land. An instance, well authenticated, is reported of a Christian mother, who, influenced by this talk against him, on hearing that Mr. Jefferson had been elected President, took her Bible and hid it away, declaring that the infidel President should never burn her Bible. There is good reason to believe that this is the origin of the charge of infidelity against Thomas Jefferson, and though having no foundation, many well informed people are not sure, even to this day, that he was not indeed an enemy to the Christian faith. Of course

neither James O'Kelly, nor Thomas Jefferson was an infidel."*

On one of his preaching tours Mr. O'Kelly was taken very sick near Winchester, Virginia. He and Bishop Asbury had not seen each other for some time, and it so happened that the Bishop was in the same locality at the time. On learning that Mr. O'Kelly was very sick he sent two of his brethren, Reed and Walls, to ask if Mr. O'Kelly would like for him to visit him. The reply was in the affirmative. Here on Monday the 23d of August, 1802, we have an account of the last meeting on earth of these two great men. Mr. Asbury, in his "Journal," Vol. III, page 76, has this to say in regard to the meeting: "We met in peace, and asked of each other's welfare, talked of persons and things indifferently, prayed, and parted in peace. Not a word was said of the troubles of former times. Perhaps this is the last interview we shall have upon the earth." This meeting showed that both of these leaders had great souls within, though differing so much in many matters.

During the last thirty years of his life, Mr. O'Kelly labored constantly to promote the interests of the new Church which he had been instrumental in organizing. In all things he is said to have been a very energetic man, and especially so in the work of the Church. It was difficult to deflect him from any well-fixed purpose. The result was, he usually carried his point. He had great firmness in his purposes, and this is

* The above was given the writer by Dr. J. P. Barrett, editor of the *Herald of Gospel Liberty*, Dayton, O.

said to be one of the marked characteristics of the O'Kelly family in North Carolina to the present day.

He must have been a man of powerful intellect, for it is said of him that on one occasion he preached five sermons at different places in one day, and none of them bore any sameness. This seems to be a most wonderful thing, for there are but few ministers in any denomination at the present day who would attempt to do that, when helps and commentaries are being published annually by the thousand. Not only did he preach often, but sometimes he met in open discussion the enemies of the Christian Church—for they were many—and he would explain the principles of Church government, and the Biblical doctrines upon which it was founded. In the early days of the Church he often met Rev. Stephen Davis, of Gloucester County, Virginia, in open debate. Mr. Davis was one who withdrew with Mr. O'Kelly in 1792, and then went back to the Methodists to become one of the most bitter enemies of the Christian Church. Not only did Mr. O'Kelly have to preach and organize, but it was a life and death struggle to hold what he had accomplished.*

We find that Bishop Asbury and the strongest and most popular Methodist preachers followed close on his tracks to win back those who had cast their lot with the Christians. In 1805 Mr. Asbury visited Isle of

* To give the reader some idea of the hot persecutions of the early Christians, or O'Kellyites as they were called, we quote from a sketch of the life of Rev. Joseph Thomas: "It was not infrequent that the ministers of other bodies came to oppose and ridicule what they styled this 'rotten Arminian mushroom doctrine which was preached by the tail end of the Methodists, the O'Kellyites.'"

Wight and Nansemond counties, Virginia, and wrote in his "Journal": "A reaction has set in against the O'Kelly movement, as General Wells and family have returned to the Methodists, and Willis Walls is coming back, besides twenty others who left the Methodists." When Rev. Francis Asbury wrote those lines in his "Journal" he little thought that in this neighborhood, and by the people mentioned, or their descendants, there would be a strong Christian Church organized which would live and flourish for many years; but such was the case.

Soon after the organization of the Christian Church in 1794 Mr. John Scarborough Wills, who was an officer in the Revolutionary army, gave the site for a chapel, and a Christian Church was erected near Scott's Factory, about four miles from Smithfield, Isle of Wight County, Virginia. It was named Will's Chapel, in honor of the man who gave the site. This church was ministered to in the early days by Rev. Mills Barrett, and at one time it had about one hundred and twenty-five members. Later it began to decline, but as late as 1840 there was a Sunday School held there. The membership dwindled away, and some went to other churches, and the house decayed. Perhaps Oakland Christian Church may have grown from the seeds planted there.

By some means or other the report of the new organization was carried beyond the mountains, and some ministers, feeling that there was need of a reform in Church government, came over to the denomination. Prominent among these we find the names of

Ogden and Haw, who were among the first missionaries to Kentucky, and it is said that in other localities there were recruits. His opponents say that O'Kelly sowed the seeds of discord broadcast all over the section in which he was so well known, and that it was not without its effect, for the people who were seeking the greatest liberty flocked to his standards, and the new Church, in the face of all the opposition that a strong and well-organized body could bring to bear upon the situation, continued to grow in numbers.

Even when it was known to the world at large that they were gaining as fast as could be expected under the circumstances, the leading Methodist writers and historians circulated reports that they were diminishing. Rev. Jesse Lee, who was the Methodist historian of the time, writing in the year 1809, says: "They (the Christians) have been divided and subdivided till at present it is hard to find two of them that are of the same opinion. There are but a few of them in that part of Virginia where they were the most numerous." From this statement we infer that Lee had closed his eyes to the painful truth to him, and his brethren, or that he had not taken the pains to inform himself thoroughly on the subject, since at that very time the cause was prospering under Mr. O'Kelly's personal leadership. Another writer in 1829 says that the adherents of James O'Kelly, or the Christians, numbered several thousands, and had many ministers, thus showing that there had been a phenomenal growth during these years, or that Mr. Lee was mistaken in his assertion in 1809. We think the evidence strong enough to show he was mistaken.

CHAPTER XIV.

O'KELLY AS AN AUTHOR—SOME OF HIS WORKS.

Mr. O'Kelly was a man who realized the power of the press, and soon after his withdrawal from the Methodists he began to publish books and pamphlets regarding the position of himself and his adherents. In some of these he defended his patriotism and his Christian character. The first seems to have been *The Author's Apology for Protesting Against the Methodist Episcopal Government*. Probably this was first published about 1798, and is commonly called *The Apology*. (Dates are variously given by different writers. According to one he seems to have published his first work prior to July, 1798. The first edition is supposed to have been printed in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.) Before September, 1799, he sent out another, as we learn from Mr. Asbury's "Journal." As several of his works were reprinted, we account for the discrepancy of dates in that way. This book circulated freely both among his own and other people, and we may judge that it was a powerful work, for the Methodist Church is said to have ordered that all that could be got should be burned, and to-day copies of that book are very rare, notwithstanding the fact that it went through several editions; the last record of a republication being in 1830.*

* A copy was kindly loaned the writer by Dr. J. O. Atkinson, Elon College, North Carolina. This was a reprint by Dennis Heartt, Hillsboro, North Carolina, 1829.

Bishop Asbury at once began to collect material for a reply, but owing to the great amount of work he had to do, the material was turned over to Rev. Nicholas Snethen, at that time one of the Bishop's staunchest adherents, who prepared *A Reply to an Apology*. As soon as this came from the press Mr. O'Kelly came forward with his *Vindication of an Apology*, a book of sixty-two pages, printed at Raleigh, North Carolina, 1801. This also had a wide circulation for that time. These two works were written in the style of the Chronicles of the Bible.

In regard to these Bishop Asbury has this to say: "Hamet was moderate, Glendenning was not very severe, but James O'Kelly hath turned the butt end of his whip and is unmeasurably abusive." Perhaps when he penned these lines he did not think of some things he, himself, had said about Mr. O'Kelly.

For years he continued to write and publish books and pamphlets in defense of himself and the new church, and some on doctrinal points. Among these we mention the following: *Divine Oracles Consulted; Christicola*, in 1800. The Methodist Conference met at William Blount's in Isle of Wight County, Virginia, that year and a resolution was passed that an answer to this work ought to be published. Dr. Coke, Revs. Jesse Lee, Philip Bruce, and William McKendree were appointed to prepare and publish an answer to it. (This seems to have been a letter or tract, and is given in this work since it shows the spirit of the man so well.) *Church Government* was a work in which O'Kelly opposed American slavery.

The Christian Church was published in 1801. This seems to have been a work in which he gave the causes for the existence of the organization, and then gave its doctrines and principles of government, so that the world might have a clear and concise idea about him and his work, especially that part relating to the organization of the church. *Annotation on His Book of Discipline* was published in 1809. *Letters from Heaven Consulted* was published in 1822.

Besides these he published a tract on *Baptism* about 1810, in order that the church and the world might have his views concerning that ordinance. He published commentaries on the books of the New Testament. Some of these were in the possession of his descendants a few years since. Some of these works are very valuable, especially to the historian of the Christian Church, and to those who wish to see both sides of the questions of these times in other churches, and it would be a great advance in historical knowledge if all his works could be got together and kept in a historical collection of the church he organized.

He published a tract on slavery about 1798, and this was reprinted about 1838. Among his later works we have recently learned of the following: *Hymns and Spiritual Songs Designed for the Use of Christians*, partly composed by himself. This was a book of about three hundred and fifty hymns, and was published from the Minerva Press at Raleigh, N. C., by Thomas W. Scott in 1816. *The Prospect Before Us by Way of Address* was a tract or booklet, published for him in 1824, and was, perhaps, his last published work, as he died in 1826.

CHAPTER XV.

O'KELLY'S VIEWS ON EDUCATION.

We find the following recorded in the 28th and 29th chapters of O'Kelly's *Apology*, which we give as fully as possible, for without doubt here is revealed the cause of the retarded growth of the Christian Church. Owing to the views of the early fathers about education, the laymen and the ministry were not educated as they should have been, and for this reason, and this reason only, they did not have the influence that they would and should have had in their day.

In speaking of several items in the Methodist canons Mr. O'Kelly says:

"I pass over those things which treat of bonds, etc., till we come to the place of the great college, distinguished by the name of Cokesbury. There the two celebrated names (Coke and Asbury) were (as it were) to be immortalized. This was held forth to the people as 'one of the greatest charities in the world.' The sons of ministers were to be educated gratis. This would greatly relieve their widows, besides flaming ministers were expected to come of her. Great care was to be taken of the students with regard to their morals and literature. And in order to give full satisfaction to the parents, Francis (Asbury) promised to examine into their *improvements* in learning from time to time, while he himself was an utter stranger to a classical education, being, like me, born of poor parentage.

"However, the few charity boys were turned out of school, as we are informed. Young gentlemen left the college, for, as they say, instead of 'pies and puddings' they met with poverty and oppression.

"We are ever taught to believe that Cokesbury was the property of the people; but I ask if the people were ever consulted with regard to its corporation? I never did approve the step, because I thought it did not belong to our province. Moreover, I feared it originated in vainglory and lucrative motives. I say, I feared so. When the religious feelings of the people were from time to time cogently addressed, both in public and private, to display their charity, I was backward, because of unbelief. But Francis (Asbury) informed us that he was in danger of imprisonment; therefore we exerted ourselves.

"But did not he mock us, or would he have left us and gone to Mr. Davis in Bedford, and engaged \$3,000 toward another college? Whether he did or not, I am not certain, but I had cause to believe it, seeing his friends told it; however, that fell through.

"Let the witness blessed with Cokesbury charity stand forth, and tally with those repeated large sums of money. Then let the flaming minister appear, that we may see how the connection is benefited by the operation."

So slow were the fathers to realize the value of education and learning that the idea of a church newspaper did not arise until 1833, at a conference at Kedar, now Mt. Auburn, Warren County, North Carolina, and it was eleven years later before that idea was

carried out. Thus we can see that the early Christian Church, for over fifty years, neglected the main-spring of its progress, and the small numbers of the denomination to-day is the result. Education is the dynamo that drives church extension today, and this should not be neglected in any manner.

CHAPTER XVI.

COMMENTS UPON MR. O'KELLY'S WORK AND PLANS —THE WEAKNESS OF THE NEW CHURCH—MIS- REPRESENTATION, ETC.

A contemporary historian* has this to say in regard to the work of Mr. O'Kelly: "His whole life, after the secession, shows him to be a man without a plan, a reformer without a fixed object or a definite plan. O'Kelly had occupied an important post, and filled a large place in the confidence and affections of Methodism."

This, perhaps, is putting it stronger than the facts in the case will warrant, yet there is a vein of truth in the statement. A later writer, as a friend, said this:†

"For the first half century of the life of the Christian Church there was lacking a leader of executive ability in her ranks. While Mr. O'Kelly and his associates were eloquent preachers and godly men, yet they needed men of great administrative ability, comprehensive views and progressive spirits, who could see at a glance the whole field of operation, all the denominational work and its needs, and then attract all to them by the magic of their personal magnetism and superior gifts. The early fathers of the Christian Church needed more system, better organization, and more general cooperation, a greater realization of their strength, and to know how to utilize all their powers for the success of the

* Jesse Lee's History, p. 274, and following.

† Rev. W. B. Wellons, D.D.

cause. James O'Kelly was a reformer, a great reformer, but he was a reformer after the Whitfield model. He had influence with the people, which Bishop Asbury, his opponent, lacked, but he greatly lacked the administrative talent and business capacity of the bishop. Mr. O'Kelly was not a good organizer; even after he had made converts he did not seem to have the ability to organize them into churches. This Mr. Asbury always did, and each way had its effects. One became a tower of strength, the other remained weak.

"His extremely radical and liberal ideas, as is the case in every revolutionary movement, led him, and his associates, too far in their search for truth and liberty. In their earnestness for freedom from ecclesiastical power they seemed even to fear organized effort, and the result was a certain degree of looseness, and seeming carelessness characterized their efforts. They did not seem to realize that without organized effort no large body can ever hope for any marked degree of success.

"Then, again, it seems that he and his associates were more intent on preaching the truths of the Bible, which was their only creed, than they were in organizing their converts into churches, and on this account many joined other denominations, and their influence was lost to the Christian Church. They had no peculiar doctrines of their own to advocate. They stood upon the evangelical platform laid in the formation of the Episcopal Church of England, and the Methodist Episcopal Church of America, from which organization they seceded. To controvert the opinions and doctrines

of other denominations was not a part of their business. They strove to bring into cooperation the good of every sect and party, and to build up an organization which should embrace in its folds all who stood upon the common platform which was occupied by all evangelical denominations around them. Consequently their early labors were largely lost for the want of system and order in their operations. As it were they fallowed the land and sowed the seed, but others gathered the harvest. For full half a century did this scattering, wasting process go on. True, their efforts were not without effect in bringing about a better religious condition, as many were carried to other fields, and we now see the unselfishness of their labors."

So decided were they against any dictatorial government, and so much did they fear ecclesiastical tyranny, and so bent were they on the greatest possible liberty for the organization, and so complete did they regard their creed, the Bible, that there was no effort made to reduce their principles to any written form until the year 1866. At that time Rev. John N. Manning saw that it was time for the world and the church alike to have these, and so under his leadership this task was accomplished.*

Before this time Mr. O'Kelly and the Christian Church had been grossly misrepresented. Yea, they had been persecuted by opponents in other denominations, who charged them with holding sentiments and doctrines which they never held, nor thought of teach-

* This task may have been discussed before the Civil War, but nothing was accomplished. It is thought that it was discussed in 1858 at Cypress Chapel by the Southern General Convention.

ing. In the early days there was no efficient means of refuting these slanders, consequently, in almost every place designing persons either classed the Christians as Unitarians, Disciples or Campbellites, when the truth was everywhere known among them that they never sympathized with, nor held, the views of either one or the other of these sects. In the *Christian Church South* the *truth* of the *Divinity of Christ Our Head* has never been denied, nor has the church ever practiced water baptism for the remission of sins. Yet these things were everywhere charged against the young church. It was so put down by the contemporary church historians, not of one denomination particularly, but of many. Owing to these facts, the early Christian Church, for a great many years, did not have the sympathy of the evangelical denominations whose orthodoxy had never been questioned. As they had no church paper or regular publication in the South until 1844, the means of refuting these charges were poor,* and the nonreading public was misled by the craftiness of some who had perhaps more prejudice in their hearts than they had of God's love.

By giving the above we have brought the history much further than was intended, but it was thought best, as these things seemed to grow from the seeds that were sown in the time about which we are writing, and

* We give an instance of how some of the charges were met by referring the inquiring reader to page 29 of Rev. W. B. Welton's pamphlet, *The Christians in the South Not Unitarian in Sentiment*, where he gives a card that appeared in the *American Beacon*, a paper published in Norfolk, Va., January 22, 1835.

it was thought that it would serve to give a better view of the situation.

In the early days of the church, the ministers, while they were God-fearing and consecrated men, were not, as a rule, educated. The most of them seemed to have followed some secular calling all the week, and then preached on the Sabbath. There were very few who devoted all their time to the ministry, and traveled preaching the Word of God. Mr. O'Kelly seems to have been one who did, but the majority farmed, kept store, practiced medicine, or taught school, as if they sought first the things of this world, and afterwards the kingdom of God. They did not look to the ministry for a support, but they were unwilling to give up preaching altogether. They worked cheap, and in return they gave poor preaching. There was no incentive for young men to prepare themselves for the ministry, and, as a result, the most of them were poorly equipped for their work. Their secular labors kept them from visiting the sick, and encouraging the weak. The preachers were often unable to be present at the burial of the dead, and Justices of the Peace solemnized the marriages and pocketed the fees. Under these conditions was it strange that the early Christian Church had such a hard struggle for existence?

Under another head we will give Mr. O'Kelly's views on education in the church, and we will find that there lay the great weakness of the denomination; for it was a great many years after his death before there was any school for the training of ministers, and only recently have they had a denominational college.

CHAPTER XVII.

O'KELLY BEFORE HIS WITHDRAWAL—QUOTATIONS FROM DIFFERENT WRITERS—AFTER THE WITHDRAWAL — MISREPRESENTATIONS — FALSE ACCUSATIONS—O'KELLY IN HISTORY TO-DAY—QUOTATIONS FROM RECENT HISTORIANS—O'KELLY AS HIS OWN WITNESS—LETTERS—DIFFICULTIES IN HIS WAY.

In this chapter it is the purpose to show, first, in what esteem Rev. James O'Kelly was held previous to the Baltimore Conference of 1792 by the Methodists, and to do this we will give several quotations from his contemporaries. Second, we will note what was said of him at the time of his withdrawal, and for some years thereafter. Here we will find the misrepresentations, and evil speeches made against him and his work. Third, we will give quotations from later Methodist writers and historians, to show that the earlier Methodist historians were sadly mistaken in the pictures they gave of the man. We do not condemn any one, but facts will stand for themselves, and the reader may determine for himself what is the truth of the matter.

In studying these bits of history there is an old maxim, the truth of which has impressed itself upon me with great force. It is this: "Circumstances alter cases." Up until 1792 there had been no fault found with O'Kelly and his work. Everything he had done bore the stamp of approval. He was always a power in the field, and one of the bright and shining lights. Let

us see what some of the Methodists have put in print, and left as a heritage for the present and future generations.

One writer says: "James O'Kelly had long lived on the border between Virginia and North Carolina as a circuit preacher and presiding elder. His influence swayed the ministry and people on both sides all along the line. He had been a devout and zealous man, an eloquent preacher and a strenuous Methodist, a tireless laborer, and an heroic opposer of slavery, and enforced the anti-slavery law of the church.*

Mr. Asbury says in his "Journal," volume 1, page 367: "Brother O'Kelly gave us a good sermon from the text, 'But I keep under my body, and bring it under subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway' (1 Cor., 9:27), on April 5, 1764, at Ellis's Chapel, Sussex County, Virginia." On page 384 of the same volume Mr. Asbury says: "Brother O'Kelly let fly at them (about slavery) and they were made mad enough."

His influence was felt everywhere in the section in which he had labored so long, for one writer says: "He was one of the most commanding men of the itinerancy and preached at the Baltimore Conference of 1792, from Luke 18:5, and the power of the Lord attended the word." This was on Sunday afternoon before the "Right of Appeal" was lost the first of the next week. Another writer says: "Mr. O'Kelly had

* His firm opposition to the institution of slavery is one reason why we always believed he was of Irish and not of American birth.

been stationed almost continuously for ten years in Virginia, and presided over a large district of circuits in the connection. It could therefore not have been for personal reasons that he urged the 'Right of Appeal' from the bishop to the conference." Another contemporary says: "He was very useful and had much influence in his section."

He is described as being "laborious in the ministry, a man of zeal and usefulness, an advocate for holiness, given to prayer and fasting, and an able defender of the Methodist doctrine and faith, and hard against slavery in private, and from the press and pulpit."

From the above we infer that many of the charges brought against him a few years later were without even the semblance of truth, and that many exaggerated and farfetched conclusions were drawn in regard to his motives.

Before the last link was broken that bound him to Methodism, Bishop Asbury sent messengers to him telling him that he was his "right eye, right hand, and right foot";* thus showing in what esteem he was held by the bishop. Would he come back, he was all right in every respect. Dr. Thomas Coke's esteem is expressed in his letter to Mr. O'Kelly from Wilmington on May 4, 1791, already quoted.

From these quotations, and others previously made, the reader can make up his mind about Mr. O'Kelly's standing in the Methodist connection before 1792.

Rev. James O'Kelly's "Right of Appeal" was lost at a late hour on Monday night at Otterbein's Church in

* O'Kelly's *Apology*, Chap. 18, verse 2.

Baltimore. On Tuesday morning a letter was received from Mr. O'Kelly and some of his firm supporters informing the Conference that they could no longer sit among them, because the "Right of Appeal" was not allowed. A committee was at once appointed to reconcile the seceders, if it were possible. As we have seen they met and utterly failed to accomplish the desired end. He and his associates remained in Baltimore for a day or two longer, to see if an injured preacher could get an appeal from the bishop's appointment. Dr. Thomas Coke said in the final interview "That (the 'Right of Appeal') can not be granted." James O'Kelly left the city. He is followed by messengers from Bishop Asbury telling him the words quoted above. He would return only on one condition, that would not be granted. Messengers were sent from Mr. O'Kelly and his associates to Mr. Asbury, proposing a compromise. This was in vain, for the Bishop would not grant it. From Piney Grove, in Chesterfield County, Virginia, they sent their formulated wishes to Mr. Asbury at the Petersburg Conference of 1793, and they received this answer: "I have no power to call such a meeting as you wish. If, therefore, 500 preachers should come on their knees before me, I would not do it." This again shows that the authority of the Methodist Church seemed to lie in the word of one man.

Mr. O'Kelly then began to plan to organize a church on what he believed to be the Bible plan. Let us now see what was said about him. The reader will observe *carefully* what a change *one act*, with the purest and most unselfish motive, and a few years work, brought about.

One writer of the time said: "There was little doubt that James O'Kelly's spirit was tainted with ambition." To this we will agree, if the right construction be put on the sentence. He was very ambitious for a free and untrammelled church, and to see all men on the same footing in religious as well as civil matters. He wanted to put the government of the church on the same basis as that upon which the civil fabric rested; that is, on a democratic, instead of an autocratic, basis.

It was said to be the opinion of an English lawyer, a man of infidel principles, who, strange to say, admired the Methodist Church (government polity), and witnessed with many regrets the O'Kelly schism, advised Rev. Jesse Lee and many other leading ministers to make O'Kelly a bishop, "for," said he, "if you will let him share the dreaded power with Asbury, he will no longer fear it," and another writer, commenting on this, seemed to think that the lawyer was nearer right than wrong. From the bits of history we have been able to collect, it appears that he was not contending for power, but for the greatest freedom to all. He was striving to adhere to the original plan of Mr. Wesley, and the English Methodists, while Bishop Asbury was trying to depart from it, for the Methodists of England, as we have shown, have never had bishops. Our contention is, as facts seem to abundantly justify, that Mr. Asbury was very ambitious to see himself at the head of a great system of autocratic church government in America, even if it were without precedent in the annals of Methodism, and was condemned by John Wesley.

Bishop Asbury, in his "Journal," soon after the

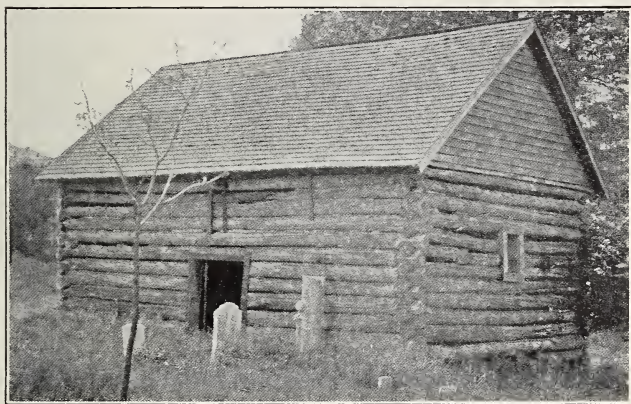
secession, wrote as follows: "James O'Kelly has told a tale of me which I think it is my duty to tell better. He writes 'Francis ordered the preachers to entitle him bishop in directing their letters.' The secret truth of the matter was this: the preachers having had great difficulties about the appellations of Mr. and Rev., it was talked over in the yearly conference, for then we had no General Conference established. So we concluded it would be by far the best to give each man his official title as deacon, elder, and bishop. To this the majority agreed. James O'Kelly giveth all the good, the bad, and the middling of all our church to me. What can be the cause of all this ill-treatment which I receive from him? Was it because I could not settle him for life in the South District of Virginia? Is this his gratitude? He was in the district for ten years as a presiding elder, and there was no peace with James until Dr. Coke took the matter out of my hands. After we had agreed to hold a General Conference to settle the dispute, and behold when the General Conference by a majority went against him he treated the General Conference with as much contempt almost as he had treated me, only I am the butt of all his spleen." The reader who has followed the story thus far can make up his own mind as to who was right, and who showed the contempt.

We come now to the charge that has done James O'Kelly and the Christian Church, South, more harm than anything else that has ever been written against them. It is this: "James O'Kelly and the Christian Church were Unitarian in sentiment." We have de-

voted a special chapter of this work to the refutation of this charge, and so only make slight reference here to show how quickly the sentiment of men may change.

Rev. Jesse Lee says, for one thing: "He denied the distinct personality of the Holy Trinity. He affirmed that instead of distinct PERSONS in the Godhead, the terms Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were only intended to represent three offices of one glorious and Eternal Being." Another writer said: "It was a favorite expression of his that God was Father from eternity, Redeemer in time, and Sanctifier forevermore." Says Dr. Lee: "It was enough to make the saints of God weep before the porch and the altar, and that both day and night, to see how the Lord's flock was carried away captive by that division."

On the 25th of May, 1792, in the Greenbrier Conference, held at Rehoboth Chapel, Sinks of Greenbrier County, Virginia, (now West Virginia), says Rev. Stith Mead: "When we met in conference we were all examined by the bishop as to our confession of faith and orthodoxy of doctrine agreeably to the accuracy of Wesleyan Methodism. On a closer examination it was discovered that two of the preachers composing the present session of conference, namely John Lindsay and George Martin, coming from the district where James O'Kelly was presiding elder, had imbibed heterodox opinions from him tending to Unitarianism. All the conference was now requested by Bishop Asbury to bring forward all the Scripture texts they could recollect to prove the personality of the Trinity, and particularly the Holy Ghost, at which time these



OLD REHOBOTH M. E. CHURCH, NEAR UNION, W. VA.

Built in 1785 and deeded to the Conference to remain their property as long as grass grows and water runs. The oldest church west of the Alleghany Mountains. A typical mountain church, where, in 1792, the Conference met mentioned by Rev. Stith Mead, and the discussion about the Trinity took place.

preachers recanted their errors in the doctrine and were retained in the Methodist fellowship.”* It is a question of serious doubt, even if the ministers named held views contrary to those of the Methodists of the time, whether they imbibed those views from James O’Kelly.

A later historian writes as follows: “The most potent cause for the failure of O’Kelly’s plan was the heresy which his system contained. This was the taint that corrupted the whole schism. His Unitarian errors allowed no Savior to be offered to the people, and, destitute of that vital and central force, his church was soulless and its name a falsehood. But the motives of the leaders seem to have been as devoid of purity as their system was of truth.” We again refer the reader to the chapter in this work entitled “The Alleged Heresy of James O’Kelly and the Christian Church Disproved,” for an answer to this charge.

All these things were said about a man whose views on theology are not questioned by the most scrutinizing of to-day, and who had the manhood to stand up and say what he believed was right and what was wrong, and who had no idea in his mind but to save sinners by “pointing them to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” We think the chapter mentioned proves beyond all doubt that these charges were basely false. But we will call some of the best Methodist historians of modern times as witnesses that the charges were without any foundation in fact. The later Methodist writers look through the clear glass and

* *Bennett’s Memorials of Methodism in Virginia*, page 307.

see things as they are; and their eyes are not blurred by prejudice as were those of the earlier writers. Hear what they have to say.

Mr. George P. Smith, in his life of Bishop Francis Asbury, says: "The positive old Irishman had been too long in control of things in his section to submit to another's dictation, and a separation between the two was inevitable. There was, however, nothing in O'Kelly's motives which seems to have been censurable. He merely thought the arbitrary course which a bishop might take ought to be anticipated and provided against." From this we may infer that Mr. O'Kelly was pleading the cause, not so much for his own time, as for the future, and if we take this view we will see that his proper place was beside his friend, Thomas Jefferson, who was doing so much at this time on the same line in the affairs of state. He saw the seed being planted, and thought what the harvest might be, and with a prophet's eye he laid himself aside and plead for what he thought would be for the greatest good to the greatest number. From another point of view, who is prepared to say that the influence of James O'Kelly is not seen and felt in the ranks of the Methodist Episcopal Church today? We find one of their best historians of modern times writing as follows: "Impartial history requires us to say we find no evidence of the heresy alleged against James O'Kelly—that he was unsound on the Trinity and hastened his secession for fear of being brought to trial. An error so radiant must have worked out in him and his followers striking manifestation, but none such appear. The

few preachers and people who continue to represent him, represent so far as known a sound doctrine and experience. The trouble was governmental, and not doctrinal, and in the later adjustments of Episcopal Methodism, occasion could hardly be found for its recurrence." (Bishop Holland N. McTyeire's *History of Methodism*.)

Another says: "There is little doubt that a man so bold and confident as O'Kelly would hesitate to give expression to his doctrinal views," and in this research nothing has been found that would indicate that he held anything but the most orthodox views. If he said or wrote anything to the contrary its production has been challenged in vain.

These last quotations were written after the controversy had been ended for many years, and gives the true version of the whole matter, as all people of unbiased minds are compelled to see.

While he was in the minority, yet the measure for which he contended and worked so hard to establish has, in modified form, woven itself into the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and in some sections of the country it has been carried out almost entirely. Even in Virginia the Methodists are gradually working toward the same plan of government.

James O'Kelly was accused of trying to mislead the people. We will call the accused and let him answer for himself. We will give some letters from his pen to former friends, written about the time he "seceded." We believe that these will show that, instead of trying to mislead the people, he was a truth

seeker, and was willing to lay self aside in order that truth and right might prevail.

The following is the substance of a letter from a Republican minister to an Episcopalian minister:

"Dear Sir: The following lines are addressed to you, for the purpose of investigating a subject important in its nature, and painful to me in its effect. That there has been a division in the Methodist Church, and this division was produced by the despotic principles of government, existing and increasing in that Church, are facts not to be denied. That pacific measures were used by the aggrieved party to obtain a reunion, is a fact which their petitions, and addresses, doth abundantly prove. When these facts came first to my view, I used all the candor and discernment I possessed in the investigation of the subject. And truth obliged me to believe that the complaints were just, and that the cause of the division was sufficient to justify the effect. The sentimental division naturally led me into the division, for the doctrine then exhibited to us was, 'If you are dissatisfied go out.' Therefore,, unconditional submission, or a separation, was the only alternative. One would have thought, as we could not agree together, parting might have ended the dispute; but alas! we have found it quite otherwise.

"For no sooner had we turned our backs, than a flood of abuse, calumny, and cruel slander came pouring forth after us as a furious flood! From the groundless reports that soon spread, and increased, one could hardly forbear thinking that a lying spirit had gotten among the prophets. But I long resisted the thought,

and strove to believe that these reports originated in mistake, and not in willful misrepresentations. But the moment I cast mine eyes on that vile assertion in the minutes of your last General Conference, saying, 'A few indeed, who were as great enemies to the civil government under which they lived as to our discipline, have left us,' etc., I was shocked at the saying, and supposed I had entertained a better opinion of the members of your conference than they were deserving of. And you, sir, being a member of that conference, I view you as having a hand in that *infamous* slander. And now, you are pleased to offer no better apology than, 'If the cap fits them, let them wear it.' On which I would remark, that your perfidious insinuation is false. The cap, as you are pleased to call it, does not fit us as descriptive of our characters; but as an unequivocal *design* to slander us. And as you are pleased to make the civil government under which we live, a part of the controversy between us, I will here present you with a few observations on that subject.

"I would, in the first place, ask if you know what kind of government we live under? And how it was obtained? Wesley, in his circular letter, observes that we are partly governed by congress, and partly by the provincial assemblies. This is a truth, which naturally leads the mind to inquire how these legislative bodies are raised, and from what source their authority is derived. The answer to these interrogatives is easy: They are raised by delegation, and derive their legislative authority from the sovereignty of the people, to whom they are constitutionally bound.

“Such a government by representation is a government out of society; and the constitution by which the legislators are bound to the people speaketh on this wise: ‘The legislative, the judicial, and the executive departments of the government shall be separate and distinct.’

“With this view of our civil government, I demand of you to point out that part of our conduct to which you allude, when you published us enemies to civil government. One might be led to think from reading that sentence in your minutes that your discipline was so like our civil government that whoever opposes the former must be an enemy to the latter. Let us therefore proceed to the business of comparing them together.

“I have already observed that the civil government is by representation; this is granted by your General Conference. Our rulers there mentioned are not only elected, but reelected; and all from the highest to the lowest are amenable to the people. Let us take a view of your church government, as formed, and repeatedly revised by conference.

“Here we find that the bishops, president elders, elders, deacons, and common preachers, are none of them properly the delegates of the people; but they are the rulers of the church. You will allow, sir, that the General Conference is not raised by election in the church. Neither do they consider themselves accountable to the people, because they do not derive their legislative authority therefrom. Indeed, your people are not allowed to complain, nor point out to each other

what they believe to be defects in the government; for this brings them under the character of being disorderly members, who are sowing discord.

"I have often asked who the preachers were accountable to for their conduct. The answer was: 'To God.' From this I infer that they (as a legislature) are accountable to no human power; and if so, no human creature ought to trust them. There does indeed appear a kind of election and responsibility in the conference, but what is that to the people? We find the General Conference composed only of traveling preachers, therefore the members of the church and the settled ministers are out of the business. The election that appears in conference is a thing in show, and not in reality. An election respects two things; first, the choosing of members into the body, and, secondly, the choosing officers out of that body. 'Tis absurd to suppose that an elected body has a right to elect members into itself, and this is the only show of an election to be found in receiving members into the conference.

"And even in this election the bishop holds his negative, which negative he also hath in the choice of all the officers. Therefore, there is no proper election in the church, nor the appearance of it, but what the bishop hath his negative upon. Elections under such restrictions deserve not the name. The governors of the Methodist Episcopal Church not only come into office without being elected by the suffrage of the people, but continue in office, so long as they please to walk by the *rules* themselves have made, and whenever they please to change their conduct, they can change the laws.

“These, sir, are the principles of your constitution; and (they) are as essentially different from the principles of your civil government as a government over society is different from a government out of society. Moreover, there appears another important difference between our civil government and yours. For your laws of discipline are not only made by a body of men who are accountable to nobody, but are judged and executed by the same hands. The legislative, judicial, and executive departments of our civil government, are separate and distinct, whereas your government is fully consolidated, because every part is inseparably united in the same hands.

‘From these remarks it must appear that your discipline is as incompatible with our civil government as a government by assumption compared to that by representation.

“There is another subject, still, that deserves a serious thought, which very thought creates sensation in my breast. That is to say, we have purchased this liberty government by representation at no less price than the blood and lives of thousands; some of whom died in the hospitals, others on the road—and numbers fell in the field of battle with the English! What suffering of body and mind they passed through before the awful hour—who can describe?

“There is one thing of importance they have done for us, ‘they have freed us from despotic negatives, and British tyranny’; and have left us, sealed with their own blood, the valuable legacy of civil and religious liberty, a liberty guarded and preserved by representa-

tion; and this is the government the General Conference is pleased to charge us with being enemies to. Groundless charge; cruel slander—the very offspring of your spurious episcopacy.

“The leading characters in the grand synod are Thomas (Coke) and Francis (Asbury). The one from the north of England, since the American revolution; the other (Francis) came over from the land of monarchy, before the Revolution, and I believe both are British subjects (in their hearts) to this day. What excellency is there to be found in those men, beyond others, that conference must bend to their caprice? Is it the country from whence they have emigrated? Or is it the government under which they were educated? Or what is it that renders them so illustrious in the eyes of the conference? Can it be the principles of despotism they have brought with them? Or the arbitrary manner in which they have been known to conduct the business of the government in the church?

“As to their literature, if we may judge from their publications, there appears no great display of wisdom therein. Their journals are, for the most part, insipid. They are partly filled with violent attacks on personal and public characters—these are no marks of learning. Their kind of discipline may (perhaps) answer better to the north of this, where the British armies were long suffered to plunder the honest patriots.

“But when they came to exercise their felonious practices in Virginia, they were sent back in the degraded situation of prisoners; and I hope that British policy will always meet with the like repulse from our

Virginians that the British power has done. Your Bishop *Asbury* has complained in my hearing that he had more trouble in governing the Virginians than all the connection besides. It is not our superior wisdom, nor ignorance, that renders us so ungovernable; but our invariable determination to stand fast in our civil and religious liberties, 'wherein God hath strangely made us free.'

"Whatever you may think of me, my spirit, or manner of writing, is a matter of indifference with me. You are not situated as I am, and can not feel as I do. Only put yourself where I stand, charged with a crime of the deepest dye; a crime of the most enormous magnitude; which, if believed, is calculated to entail infamy, and disgrace on posterity! But, why am I thus treated? Is it because I oppose a government not only arbitrary in its principles, but *arbitrary* and cruel in its operation, which *cruelty* we should feel were we not sheltered under the wing of that *government* which you say we are enemies to?

"Our *European* brethren know, as the Jews did, that it is not lawful for them to inflict punishment; therefore, hope to influence the *civil* rulers against us. But heaven be thanked, your influence with them is but weak. The ministers of your conference may flatter themselves and, like the ostrich, suppose they are sufficiently hid from public view, when only their own eyes are covered, but our judicious men can see that self-created dignities, such as your bishops boast of, must have originated in pride and vainglory! And if they can not free themselves from the principles of

their education (as some noble English brethren have done) they had better return to the land of their nativity, where kings and bishops reign.

“Ah, no! The secret is, they have left a land of cruelty, where they were governed and not the governors. They had to flee the tyranny there they wish to inflict here.

“I shall now take my leave of you, and until you are more careful of innocent characters, more attentive to truth, and show more respect for the sacred Scriptures—I bid adieu. T. H.

“I would add, in England such episcopal dignity hath no existence. The pulpits of the Episcopal churches are not accessible to such men. Were they to offer to exercise episcopal authority there, the Holy Sea would overflow, and they would be rejected as impostors. This they know.” (Chapters 22-26 of O’Kelly’s *Apology*.)

He writes as follows to his friend of former times:

To Dear Brother Nicholson, Local Preacher:

O my brother! Alas my brother! I beseech God to grant you a share in every blessing of the everlasting covenant. O brother, the heart knows its own bitterness! I am too often giving way to the overflowings of a full heart. O the heart-breaking thoughts! The Methodist preachers who stood together like soldiers are now afraid of each other, as you told me last evening you feared me. Fearful prelude to a universal decline or a fearful separation! Find out the cause, search for the Achan. One there is in our camps, and

if the lot justly falls on me, cast me away and there will be a calm. But be sure, before God, to give me justice. I am not given to change. A Methodist I am, and how can I change? The elders of the North, not knowing what to accuse me of, make me their table laugh, still I am loth to go away.

What have I done? Overturned government? What? The Council—not Methodism. I only say no man among us ought to get in the Apostle's chair with the keys, and stretch a lordly power over the ministry, and the kingdom of Christ. 'Tis a human invention, a quicksand, and when my gray hairs may be preserved under ground, I may be remembered. We ought to respect the body before any mere man. A consolidated government is always bad. We have published that we believe a General Conference to be injurious to the church. District conferences have lost their suffrages; men of wit will leave the traveling connection. Boys with their keys under the absolute sway of one who declares his authority and succession from the Apostles—these striplings must rule and govern Christ's Church, as master workmen, as though they could finish such a temple. People are to depend upon their credibility. These things are so; I know what I say; I am able when called upon to answer it. I am a friend to Christ, to his church, but not to prelatie government. If you will carefully read the bishop's address to me and others of the preachers who opposed the late proceedings, there you will find the heavy reflections—and the very manner of the new constitution. But unless you look over and over it 'tis hard to understand. My

dear brother, farewell, reject me, all of you, and let me feel the sneers, the frowns of strangers. My days are few among you, when the members reject me I drop my journeyings.

I am, etc.,

(Signed) JAMES O'KELLY.

To Jesse Nicholson,
Portsmouth, Va.

The second letter is addressed to Col. Hollowell Williams, of Currituck County, North Carolina, a member of the North Carolina Convention of 1776, which framed the Constitution of North Carolina, a leading Methodist. It is as follows:

“No doubt you have heard I had resigned my place in the conference. I protested against a consolidated government, or any one lord, or archbishop, claiming apostolic authority, declaring to have the keys. Thus our ministry have raised a throne for bishops, which being a human invention, a deviation from Christ and dear Mr. Wesley, I cordially refuse to touch. Liberty is worth contending for at the point of the sword in divers ways—monarchy, tyranny tumbling both in church and kingdom—while our preachers are erecting a throne for gentlemen bishops in a future day, when, fixed with an independent fortune, they may sit and lord it over God’s heritage. I speak in the fear of God and feel for the dear people. District conferences are nugatory, having given up their suffrages. Our preachers, so powerfully influenced by a few wise men, part located, have voted away their own liberty; no appeal for an injured man. The preacher sent hath

sole power to receive or reject whom he will; if a sinner is by him admitted to the sacrament, members are subject to commune with him, and accounted accursed if they depart. What I say I am able to make appear in the spirit of meekness with fear. I am still a true man and know what I say. If I would hold my peace and stay at home I might have during my life £40 per annum. Would I do as others wish, I might have peace and cash. I can do nothing against the truth, nor can I turn my mind as a man can his coat. I had rather suffer with my own people.

(Signed)

JAMES O'KELLY.

The third letter is given in his *Apology*, and is a *Letter of Address to the Methodist Christians*.

“James, the least, and elder brother, by the mercy of God, and not of man, unto the members of the Methodist E. Church, greetings: Grace, mercy and love be multiplied unto you all, in and through our Lord Jesus Christ.

“After you have read and considered the contents of my writing, I hope you will do me justice to the best of your judgment.

“You will find that the preachers are striving to support their government and power, at the expense of my character! It would be needless to repeat the trifling reports respecting my obstinacy, self-will, etc. But they have gone as far as to charge me with dishonesty, saying: He wronged a person in the purchase of land, and a mill—O cruel slander! I solemnly declare, I gave the man his asking for the land, and paid him

gold to oblige him, when paper money was a lawful tender. This I did before asked, and a word of *dispute* never passed. The *old mill* was valued, at *his* request, and I paid the valuation before the money was due, and took in my *last* bond. All this I am *able* to prove.

“I expect these things have been sounded in your ears. They say I am a man of a *divisive* spirit, and a party was what I had in *view* from the first. In this I am wronged also; as my letters can testify, if they were brought forth. Yes, my former letters can witness that I was ever warmly opposed to a division. Some say that I declared I had rather lose an arm. I have been provoked to speak, but I dare not say that I ever spake that; but if I did, I spake as I thought—no doubt. I think I have no need of former letters nor the testimony of those who have heard me speak against a separation, but my conduct will prove this. I continued among you, in love and friendship, as long as I possibly could after leaving conference. But you shut your doors against *me*, and drove me from your *union*, what more could I do?

“This is not all; I am ready now to be with you in love and church communion, as ever: Think and let think. Is thy heart as *mine*? Give me thy hand. If love is denied, I call for the ordinance of justice. Never condemn a person before you have heard both; for he that is first in his own cause, seemeth right, but his neighbor cometh in and searcheth him out. If your prejudice is too strong for your judgment, then I had rather appeal to Cæsar. You are taught to mark

them that cause divisions, but let your teachers state matters fairly, and finish the text, 'Mark them that *cause* divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned,' etc.

"I am not the cause of the *schism* in the body, which word signifies cut, or cleft; neither do I teach false doctrines; nor do I wish to be divided from you: only give me liberty of conscience. When Paul wrote, he had no view of the Methodist E. government, nor doth his words condemn those that forsake it; but the Scripture government and doctrine was his standard. The cry is, 'He hath no business among our people.' What, have no business among mine own children in the Lord and Master's family, where I have spent the prime of my life?

"In the beginning of our distress, I was not only comforted and encouraged by Thomas (Coke), but awfully warned to stand against the proceedings of *Francis* (Asbury) at my peril.*

"As there is no evil in the letter I have inserted, let no evil be thought of it. I write in self-defense, not to hurt the character of Thomas; neither can it hurt him. I have other letters which might give some light, but God forbid I ever should discover such meanness or wickedness as to do things through strife or vainglory.

"Some time past I saw a letter written by a learned person (not in the church), to an Episcopal elder. I observed the following sentences, viz: 'If Mr. Coke and Asbury are bishops (as they say) by regular order

* This letter was from Wilmington, Del., and has already been quoted.

and succession, I ask whom did they succeed? You will say they succeeded Wesley. Was he a bishop? No. How then can they be bishops by succession? But how about regular order? Regular order is something done according to law. Bishop in England is a title of honor and nobility, seeing they have a seat in the House of Lords. A bishop nominated in England by regular order needs the king in person. Was this the order of your two bishops?

“The learned Dr., by deriving, or rather driving, the word overseer up to the Greek by a strange kind of backward *etymology*, hath found one word that he thinks may appear to favor episcopacy. The word is from *epi*, *super*, and *skeptomai*, or the Latin *video*: which, being interpreted, is *super video*, to look over,’ as elder, presbyter, overseer. No superior order is found there.

“Finally, brethren, I am drawing to a close. To the best of my judgment, I have given you (as to the substance) a faithful account. To which, if you request it, I can affirm, and produce the testimony of others, who believe as I do, and will affirm to the best of their judgment, as to the substance of those facts. My character is now fully tried, and powerfully strained, but not grazed; for they can not prove one evil against me. God hath showed me what is good; and I have striven to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly. Thus, my character will appear with double luster, and be established forever. He that diggeth a pit for his brother, will be in danger of falling in, as the case of Haman and Mordecai will show.

"I am thinking in what manner my exalted brethren will answer what I have written, when conscience must speak in them. Perhaps they may judge that silent contempt will be the best policy; or pick at particular words, and sneer; or darken counsel with many words of theirs. If my opponents write at all on the subject, that will answer any good purpose, we sincerely desire that they may attempt to produce vouchers from the Book of God, to prove their episcopal dignity and legislative authority.

"The lay members are not the people that gave the offense, or caused the separation. You have no voice in forming your own government, but receive whatever your ministers *will impose*; nor dare to condemn a given law. I remember you in love; I write in tears; I pass by your houses in sorrow; I am as you are; you have not injured me at all. I desire union with you—think and let think. How cruel for us to be separated by the voice of tyranny! I cordially despise slavery in every sense of the word; but thee I love.

"Thine as ever,

"CHRISTICOLA."

Beginning his work at a time when such poisonous arrows were thrown at him as we have seen in the course of this chapter, we begin to see what Rev. James O'Kelly and his associates had to encounter in order that they might place themselves and their constituents in the proper light before the world. Nor were these the only obstacles they had to encounter. The whole country at that time was to some extent

tainted with infidel and atheistic opinions. One man, in writing of these times, expressed his opinion and said that the nineteenth century would see the end of Christianity, as it seemed that the whole country was swept by infidel and atheistic doctrines. Many leading men in the pulpit had like fears.

Mr. O'Kelly and his associates were in a new and sparsely settled country, education was not general, there were few newspapers, and very few postroads, and travel was slow and very expensive. They had handed in their resignations to a much larger body, and one to some extent established in the minds of the people, and now they had to begin their work as proselytes. It was a mammoth undertaking, and one that would have daunted any but hardy pioneers in a new country. In addition, they were all poor people and hardly to be reckoned with in the financial world, and while money is not a requisite to one's personal salvation, yet it is a means to an end in religious work, as well as in any other, and without it progress is very slow. The history of the organization proves this.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ALLEGED HERESY OF REV. JAMES O'KELLY, AND OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, DISPROVED.

From the time Rev. Jesse Lee stood in Baltimore, Maryland, and listened to "one of the preachers" (now unknown, if ever known) as he told the probable reason for James O'Kelly's withdrawal from the conference, and the Methodist connection, until about a decade ago, James O'Kelly, and the church he organized, have been put down as *Unitarian* in sentiment. The report was first circulated by his enemies in the Methodist connection. It gained credence through prejudice, and because people do not, as a rule, care to investigate the truth of history, but prefer to believe the worst and let the good be left unnoticed. It was not long before it was put on the printed page, and from that time on he was put down as denying the doctrine of the Trinity. It should be said here that no sect did this alone. His friends and his foes alike, both in error, have put him down as such in their writings. Eternity alone can tell the loss that these things have caused. For there is no foe so harmful and hurtful to a preacher as the charge of heresy. True or false, it answers its purpose. The case of James O'Kelly was no exception to the general rule. Bishop Paine, McKendree's biographer, says of O'Kelly: "Indeed, there is strong probability that knowing he would be impeached on account of his denial of the distinct personality of the Holy Trinity, he felt himself

in a strait between expulsion and secession," and another writer says of this statement "what Christian magnanimity of statement."

Is there any truth in the alleged heresy of James O'Kelly? To determine this we have to search through bushels of chaff to find the truth. It will be found with other witnesses who are not partial to him on that score. The reader may see the evidence, and then make up his own mind. The investigation is worth the time and trouble, for there was never a man in Methodist history so roundly abused or maligned as James O'Kelly.

No historian has ever yet produced real evidence to substantiate the charge. In his *Apology* O'Kelly gives the form of ordination for Christian preachers as follows: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the authority of the Holy Scriptures, with the approbation of the Church, and with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, we set apart this our brother to the Holy Order and Office of Elder in the Church of God, in the name of the *Father*, and of the *Son*, and of the *Holy Ghost*. Amen." The italics in the triune blessing are his own. It is noteworthy that this reference, by implication, to his views of the Trinity is the only one to be found in any of his writings for many years after. If in his preaching he ever expressed a formula of belief as to its differing from that found in the Articles of Religion of the Methodist Episcopal Church of America, its production is challenged. He was an original thinker but not a scholastic, and, assuming that the error of his statement of the Trinity

is truthfully given in Lee's expression of it, as volunteered by one of the preachers, it will be discovered from this and other proofs that it is found in an undue emphasis upon the Divinity of Christ—that Jesus Christ was the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Nothing more heretical than this can be found as evidence against him. In preaching and conversation this emphasis no doubt caught the attention of quibblers, and in 1792 it was made the occasion for the accusation of heresy. It did not matter that the charge was based on this over-emphasis on the Divinity of Jesus Christ; he must be blocked in his course, and the attempt was made with as blunt an instrument as the heresy cry. It was boldly claimed by some that he was Unitarian in sentiment, and that the Church he organized was Unitarian in sentiment. In 1799 Bishop Asbury in his "Journal" writes: "James O'Kelly hath sent out another pamphlet, and propounds terms of union himself for the Presbyterians, Baptists and Methodists. I ask in turn, 'What will James give up? His Unitarian errors?' Probably Mr. Asbury took no pains to be better informed—he joined in the common cry. There was never a greater mistake made. Those who claim this should examine the facts in the case. Whatever else he was, if to be an Unitarian is to deny the Divinity of Jesus Christ, then James O'Kelly was as far removed as possible from being one. The good old Methodist doctrines were as zealously preached by him and his fellow preachers in the Christian Church as ever they were by the Methodist brethren; and there was nothing in their teachings that savored of O'Kelly's alleged Unitarianism.

We will give here a few quotations from Mr. O'Kelly's writings bearing directly on the doctrine of the Trinity, so the careful reader may see his position on that point:

"The Arians, or Unitarians, in this State perhaps are fading fast; some of their preachers, I hope, may be convinced of their dangerous error and return to the Christian Church. To me it appears that to deny Jesus Christ as being equal Deity is a destructive idea; and in fact it is, at least in effect, denying the Atonement."*

Again he says: "Brethren, let us as Christians make another laudable attempt respecting the sure foundation of the Christian Church. We are directed to search the Scriptures, for they testify of Jesus Christ. They show his pedigree. Isaiah, 7:14, testified that He should be born of a virgin mother, but no human father. Jeremiah 31, A woman should compass a man, that is, a woman, a virgin, should bear a son, and his name should be called Emanuel, even God with us. Chapter 9, He is to be called the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and at the same time he is Jesus our peace! He did say, the Son had not the knowledge of the end of the world, by human wisdom, nor was it ever to be revealed till it should come; it is one of those secret things that belonged to his own Godhead, by which he knew it. Christ was the wisdom of God, and the power of God. No man knoweth the Father in full, but the Son, and only the Father knoweth the Son! Again, 'the Father and I are one.' 'All that the Father hath are mine—I am in the Father and He in me.'

* James O'Kelly's *The Prospect Before Us*.

He proclaimed: 'The Father is greater than I,' in a higher state of glory and exaltation! 'I left my glory and became poor, even a servant; took upon me no reputation, even washed my disciples' feet; submitted to the shameful death of the cross, between two noted thieves, in order that my followers might be rich, and glorious in heaven.' It is not to be denied that Jesus received worship, as is due only to God. Brethren, I can assure you that the prophet Isaiah testifies that Jesus is the very God, and there is no God besides. Isaiah 45:23. The word is, 'I am *Deus*.' The prophet spoke by the Spirit of Jesus, if the Apostle Peter is good for this assertion; O hear: 'The Spirit of Christ which was in them.' 1 Peter 1:11. But the second Adam came forth from the bosom of his Father, in possession of eternal life; so came down the Lord from heaven, a quickening Spirit. He is my Lord and my God forever. Amen."*

In addition to the above we give selections from the Hymn Book compiled by himself in 1816 for the use of the Christians.† We do this that the public may see from the man himself what he believed and taught:

Hymn 74, L. M.

ONE GOD OVER ALL.

"The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Is the most high, yet God alone;
The God who formed the heavenly host,
Yet the Creator is but one."

* *The Prospect Before Us*, p. 37 and following.

† From Hymns and Spiritual Songs Designed for the Use of Christians, by James O'Kelly, printed at Raleigh, N. C., from the Minerva Press, by Thomas W. Scott, 1816.

Hymn 91, C. M.

GOD IN CHRIST.

“The great Supreme can be but one,
And Christ in God is he!
The Father dwelling in the Son,
Through all eternity!

“Jesus the Lord is truly God;
The Spirit is the same:
For each impressed the earthly clod,
When from His hand we came.”

Hymn 92, C. M.

TO US THERE IS ONE GOD.

“His glorious name we spread abroad,
As He to us revealed;
Believe in Christ, believe in God;
And have your pardon sealed.

“The law of God we all receive,
The law of Christ fulfill;
Obey the Holy Ghost and live;
And thus we do His will!”

From Mr. O’Kelly’s *The Divine Oracles Consulted*, we submit the following as a further illustration of his teachings and what he believed respecting the Divinity of Christ: “The divine child growing in favor with God and man may be illustrated as follows: With respect to man, previous to his public ministry, he was much admired for his beauty, his virtue, humility, and wisdom, a display of which, in the twelfth year of his humanity, astonished the great doctors of Jerusalem. Thus the Deity favored the humanity, until the perfect humanity received the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and thus being perfect God and perfect man, he became a full and complete Saviour. He was the great

Immanuel. Not a demigod; but the all-wise God, our Saviour. He was the divine Emanation, proceeding from the divine Center of eternal perfection; but being incarnate, God in the flesh, possessing both natures, he was prepared to feel trouble, sorrow and distress.

“What is written may suffice, out of the abundance that may be advanced, that Jesus is both Lord and God in one exalted person; who at length will show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in light which no man can approach unto; to Him be honor, and power everlasting. Amen. I Timothy 6: 15, 16.

“Friendly reader, let me entreat thee to weigh this subject with all your sense, and pray daily to the Great One to illuminate your understanding, that you may believe in Christ as Lord God, and have power to trust in him as your all-sufficient, loving Saviour. I testify against all those who view Jesus less than God; therefore, if any man refuse to give Him equal honor with the Father, He will lightly esteem that man, if not utterly reject him. Here is the stumbling block to Arians; that they should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father, which they refuse to do.

“ ‘God did the Testimony enjoin,
And then He sealed it with His blood;
The man who did His life resign,
Was perfect man and perfect God.

“ ‘But man, vain man, must thus conclude,
That all is false beyond his skill;
How low his thoughts, how rash and rude,
To contradict the Master's will.’

“If Jesus be divided from the Father, so are all believers in Christ. The only way that fallen man could ever be in union with God, was effected by the divinity and humanity becoming one. If Christ be not, then being grafted into Christ availeth nothing. Facts are stubborn things. If God and Christ be not the same, how can believers who are grafted in the Vine, partake of the root and fatness? Read D. Jarrett’s first volume.”

Rev. John Paris, of North Carolina, author of a *History of the Methodist Protestant Church*, and one who was thoroughly acquainted with the Christian Church and its divisions, bears testimony in the year 1849 as follows: “The Church in connection with Mr. O’Kelly, always did, and does still, believe, and the ministers preach the doctrine of the Trinity, the divinity of the Son of God, and his atonement for lost sinners, as fully and as closely as any people on earth.” Another writer has said: “He was as true to the Articles of Religion and the doctrinal standards of Methodism as those who traduced him,” and it is high time the historians should make a correction, and sin no more against his memory.

In order that the reader may the more thoroughly understand the position of the Christian Church on the doctrine of the Trinity in 1810, sixteen years before Mr. O’Kelly’s death, a copy of a letter from Rev. Mills Barrett to Rev. W. B. Wellons is given in full. This letter was written to disprove the statement, which had been published, that there was a division in the Christian Church in 1810, on account of one part being

Unitarian in sentiment, and another part being Trinitarian. There was a division in that year in the Christian Church, but it was over the ordinance of *Baptism*.

Isle of Wight, Va., October 24, 1859.

Bro. Wellons: At your request I will state that I was present in 1810, when a division occurred between the Christians in the South, which led to the organization of the North Carolina and Virginia Conference. It was the second year of my ministry. The cause of the division was the mode and subjects of water baptism and not the introduction of Unitarianism, as has been stated, on the authority of Leonard Prather. To my own certain knowledge *every Christian minister* in the General Meeting of 1810, when the division occurred, was a Trinitarian. I had never then heard the doctrine of the Trinity denied by anybody. The statement made on the authority of Leonard Prather, filled me with astonishment.

Truly yours,

(Signed)

MILLS BARRETT.

Every preacher in the General Meeting at Pine Stake in 1810 a Trinitarian; Rev. James O'Kelly was there; Rev. Mills Barrett, a young man just beginning to preach, having been associated with the leading preachers, and soon to become a leader in the Christian Church, South, yet he had never heard the doctrine of the Trinity denied by any one! Could any one get Unitarian preachers and Unitarian sentiments out of such a gathering?

It is also recorded of Mr. O'Kelly in the year 1810 that he was in conversation with a Unitarian minister, and that Mr. O'Kelly asked him the direct question: "If Jesus Christ were now on earth, and you knew it were he, would you worship him? The minister answered: "No sooner than I would you, for I do not believe he was any more divine." Mr. O'Kelly's reply was, "Then I have no fellowship with you."

The *Methodist Prayer-Book* that was presented to Rev. James O'Kelly when he was ordained to preach was in existence a few years ago. To that he subscribed. No Unitarian could do this. In 1829, three years after the death of Mr. O'Kelly, Mr. A. S. Foreman, of Norfolk County, Virginia, published a pamphlet in which he gave the doctrines held by James O'Kelly and the Christian Church. In this he declared that they are the same in reference to the doctrines of the Trinity as those held by the Methodist Episcopal Church. Mr. Foreman was well acquainted with Revs. James O'Kelly and Rice Haggard, and knew their position. Neither James O'Kelly nor the Church he organized was Unitarian in 1829, and the leaders from that time till now have always stamped as false the report that there was any tinge of Unitarianism in the Christian Church, South.*

The reader has now seen the source of the charge of heresy against Mr. O'Kelly, and the Christian Church, South. He knows by whom it was first cir-

* The inquiring reader is respectfully referred for further investigation to Rev. W. B. Wellons's pamphlet, *The Christians South Not Unitarian in Sentiment*, published at Suffolk, Va., in 1860. A copy in the writer's possession.

culated. He has heard the evidence, and the counter-evidence, and we believe that any fair-minded person is convinced that the charge is without any foundation in fact. We have seen that he was true to, and always did preach, the same doctrines as are taught by the Methodist Episcopal Church. His withdrawal was caused by a purely *governmental principle*, his *doctrinal principles* always remained the same.



JAMES O'KELLY MEMORIAL WINDOW

First Christian Church, Greensboro, North Carolina.
Planned by Rev. L. I. Cox.

CHAPTER XIX.

HIS LAST YEARS—HIS HOPEFULNESS—AN INTERVIEW—HIS WILL—HIS DEATH—BISHOP MCKENDREE'S TESTIMONY—MONUMENT TO HIS MEMORY—ORDER OF EXERCISES AT THE UNVEILING—THE INSCRIPTION—CONCLUSION.

In his later years Mr. O'Kelly did not lose confidence in the ultimate success of his movement. In the introduction to *The Prospect Before Us*, published in 1824, he used these words: "The little Christian Church moves gradually out of the wilderness. She has rubbed through several hard shocks, with some loss, but her true friends are getting more established; the farther we go, the more we see, and the good old primitive path appears. O the Christian Church is groaning for a reformation back to the apostolic order. Heaven bless every hand that shall aid her, and every tongue that says 'God-speed.' We have nothing so dangerous as ourselves." We see from this that hope did not desert him in age and feebleness extreme. He gave testimony to those around him, at the close of his life, that he went down to the grave satisfied with the past, and peaceful and trusting with respect to the future. He remained full of hope in spite of all opposition, the evil speeches that had been made against him and his organization, the books and papers published by his enemies condemning him for his stand. He

still believed that truth would finally prevail, and would be recognized by all thinking people.

Even in his extreme old age he seems to have been well preserved in his mental faculties, and tradition says that he would preach for two or three hours at a time. One of his main themes seems to have been "Liberty of Conscience." His will, made the same year in which he died, showed that he was still in full possession of his ever active and powerful mind.

Some years ago it was the privilege of the writer to meet and talk with Mr. Alfred Moring, who was then a very old man, and at that time (1897) he was perhaps the only living man who had heard Mr. O'Kelly preach. At the time Mr. Moring heard him he was a mere boy, and Mr. O'Kelly was a very old man—too old to stand up, and so, like Jesus in the mountains of Judæa, he sat while he preached to the audience. Since studying the subject I have often wished that some one were living who could give us a description of the man's features, and then give us the order of his sermons. Such is not the case, and unless the few scraps of history are soon collected the early history of the Christian Church, and the record of its organizer, will be lost, and coming generations will have poor knowledge of the real history of this Church, and its noble leaders in the early days.

In the early part of the year 1826 Mr. O'Kelly realized that his sun would soon set, and having some property that he wished to dispose of, on the 26th day of April, 1826, he made the following will, which we give in full:

“Will of James O’Kelly, in his own handwriting, to wit:

“In the name of God, Amen. I, James O’Kelly, of Chatham County, State of North Carolina, being in soundness of mind do constitute this my last will and testament, cordially and solemnly according to the true and honest intentions of these premises—First, as to my body and soul, God being the former of my body and Father of my spirit, I surrender them at His call, my body to the earth from whence it came, and my soul to God who gave it, in full assurance of a resurrection and a comfortable hope of acceptance. As to my temporal property it is my will to dispose of it as follows:

“Item. I give and bequeath unto my son, John O’Kelly, five dollars and what he has already received to him and his heirs forever.

“Item. I give and bequeath unto the heirs of my son, William O’Kelly, deceased, ten dollars and what they have already received, to them and their heirs forever.

“Item. I give and bequeath unto my dear and loving wife, Elizabeth O’Kelly, after my just debts are paid, every cent’s worth of property of every kind—horses, hogs, cattle, sheep, household and kitchen furniture, plantation, utensils, monies, bonds, notes of hand, to the last cent of property at her own disposal forever. If a free man hath a right to ‘do’ what he will with his own I constitute this my last will and testament. Moreover, I appoint John Moring, Sen., Executor to this my last will and testament.

"In witness whereof I have set my hand and affixed my seal this 26th day of April, 1826.

"(Signed) JAMES O'KELLY. (Seal.)

"Test:

"John Moring, Jr.

"Willis Moring."

The above instrument was probated at the November-term of the Chatham County Court, and recorded.

Although he had been a valiant soldier of the Cross, and had led thousands to the way of life, and had done so much good, yet it was necessary for him to pay the price for having been born mortal. "Pallid death knocks with equal foot at the hovel of the poor and the palace of the rich." On the evening of the 16th of October, 1826, at his home in the northeastern part of Chatham County, North Carolina, the summons came for James O'Kelly to shake off the mortal coil, and go before the Judge of all the earth to give an account of the deeds done in the body. We have not been able to get many of the details regarding his last illness and death. The circumstances connected with, and the direct cause have not been learned, but as he was in his ninety-second year and had led a very strenuous life, we may suppose that he was worn out.

As an appendix to the reprint of Mr. O'Kelly's *Apology* Rev. John P. Lemay, among other things, has this to say: "He (James O'Kelly) departed this life in the triumphs of faith on the evening of the 16th of October, 1826, after a painful and lingering illness which he bore with Christian fortitude and a perfect

resignation to the will of heaven. He was, I learn from a gentleman who had been in the habit of itinerating with him for many years, in the ninety-second year of his age, and had been a minister of the Gospel upwards of fifty years. Not long after embracing religion he became a Methodist traveling preacher, in which capacity he continued until 1793."

He was buried in the family cemetery which was on the farm that he had given to his son, William O'Kelly.

It is recorded that when Mr. O'Kelly's death was announced to Bishop McKendree, he was silent for awhile and then said: "A great man has fallen." He was an admirer of Mr. O'Kelly in his early days, and, at one time, labored with him, as we have seen.

It seems that for some time there was no slab or shaft erected to mark the place where his mortal remains were laid. In the year 1850, at the conference at Union, Alamance County, North Carolina, Revs. George G. Walker, James A. Turner and Dr. E. F. Watson were appointed a committee to have a suitable monument erected at the grave of Mr. O'Kelly, but the work of the committee was not completed until 1854, when the monument was formally unveiled. In this year the North Carolina and Virginia Conferences, embracing the churches in central Virginia and North Carolina, met at O'Kelly's Chapel in Chatham County, North Carolina, and united, taking the name of "The North Carolina and Virginia Conference." This seems to have been some time in the month of October, 1854. Rev. W. B. Wellons, who was a recognized leader in the denomination at that time, was at this meeting, hav-

ing recently returned from the American Christian Convention at Cincinnati, Ohio, where the division between the Northern and Southern Christians, over the much vexed question of slavery, took place.

It was not long after this conference before all the preliminaries were completed, and in November 1854, the formal unveiling took place. The order of exercises at the unveiling was as follows:

1. An ode, (said to have been written by Miss R. F. Scott, of Ohio, and read by Rev. John Ellis. These lines were beautiful and much admired.)
2. Prayer, by Rev. W. B. Wellons.
3. An address by Rev. Isaac N. Walter, Springfield, Ohio.
4. Remarks by Dr. T. J. Fowler.
5. Prayer by Rev. Alfred Isley.
6. Benediction by Rev. H. B. Hayes.

The shaft bears this inscription: "Erected by His Christian Friends to the Memory of Rev. James O'Kelly of North Carolina. The Southern Champion of Christian Freedom."

It seems that no date of his birth and death are given, and this piece of marble alone remains to mark the spot for the pilgrims who visit his tomb. This marble shaft, though it may endure for ages, will finally crumble to the dust; but James O'Kelly during life, erected a monument that will not perish with the ruin of time. Instead his name will become more illustrious with the fleeting years, and the longer the time the more honored his memory shall be. The Church that he loved and suffered and labored for is growing

year by year, and has assumed considerable proportions, and is loved with deep and abiding devotion for its great liberty, and the breadth of its principles. It is admired by the religious world, and many believe that the Bible, its only creed, is the only basis upon which the Christian world will ever be able to unite in one solid phalanx to cope with the powers of sin.

We have now endeavored to point out to the reader the life's work of the Rev. James O'Kelly, as we have found it in various records, as it has been gathered from the fragments of the early history of the Christian Church, and as it has been told to us by the older members of the denomination. Furthermore we have endeavored as far as possible to let the man tell his own story regarding his life and work, by giving numerous quotations from his own published works. The reader has seen what conditions prevailed in the days of Mr. O'Kelly, and how he was persecuted by those whom he had befriended, when he showed that he had the courage to stand for what he believed to be right.

We have endeavored to picture conditions exactly as they were and to follow the truth wherever it might lead. We have not tried to overreach the bounds of reason, in portraying the character of the man, but to give the plain facts.

We believe the impartial reader has found that the organizer of the Christian Church was a hero, that he served his day and generation well, and laid the foundation for a mighty and a noble structure in the religious world.

APPENDIX A.

THE "ROYAL STANDARD."

In order that the reader may get a clear and concise idea of Mr. Kelly's manner and style of writing we have appended a copy of the latter part of one of his works. To this we have let him affix his own titles. Most of his books are said to have been written not in his library, but while riding in his gig. The excerpt will suffice to show, we think, that he was well acquainted with the Bible and its teachings.

But let the reader peruse these lines, and form his own opinion of their worth:

A SKETCH ON SCRIPTURE GOVERNMENT, OR THE ROYAL STANDARD.

1. I could call forth a cloud of witnesses from the Old and New Testaments to prove the authority, and sufficiency of the Scripture *Hierarchy*, but a few will be sufficient.

2. Thus saith the Lord by the pen of Moses, in the 18th of Deuteronomy: "The Lord shall raise up a prophet (Christ), him shall ye hear in all things."

3. The word of the Lord came unto the prophet Isaiah: "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, *it is* because there is not light in them. Chap. 8:20.

4. The law and testimony must include the doctrines and government of Christ's Church.

5. I will now call for the testimony of Daniel, 9:9,

10: "Neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord, to walk in his laws, set before us by the prophets."

6. Isaiah 2:3. "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord From Jerusalem." Compare 8:16. "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples." See 11:12.

7. Jerusalem was the place where the pure Gospel Church was established; from whence the doctrine and discipline went out into all the world.

8. Matthew 28:20. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded." "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." 2 Thes. 3:6. "Now we command you brethren, in the name of our Lord," etc.

9. Chapter 33:14. "If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him."

10. The foundation of the true Church is found in Eph. 2:20. The apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ the corner stone. Compare Isaiah 9:7.

11. That Christ is the only head of the Church, can be plainly proved by Scripture and reason, Isaiah 9:6: "The government shall be upon his shoulder."

12. Ephesians 4:15. Grow up into him in all things which is the head, etc.; and Col. 1:18. And he is the head of the body, the Church. Compare Ephesians 5: Christ the head of the Church, as the husband is the head of the wife.

13. Shall the Church have two heads, or the woman two husbands? Who will not fear to set himself *head* with the Lord?

14. That Jesus is the only *law-giver*, is evident from what hath been said, and what I will add. James, the apostle, saith: "Be ye doers of the word. Fulfill the royal law." Look into the perfect law of liberty. "We have one law-giver."

15. Let Paul speak: "Do we make void the law through faith? No, we establish the law." "We are under the law of Christ." What more do we wish?

16. As Christ is the *only head* of the true Church, then are his ministers on a perfect equality. Superiority is expressly forbidden. Matt. 20:25, 28; 23-8, 10. "Be not called Rabbi."

17. To act as lords, is to sit as legislators over God's house, and that by self election; and then to execute those laws on the lay members.

18. Whereas it is written, 1 Peter 5:2, etc.: "Feed the flock of God, overlook the business, not by constraint, neither as lords over God's heritage."

19. At the conference at Jerusalem, there were no ministers by the title of bishop. The fifteenth of Acts shows that the apostles and elders were the only ministers there. Compare Acts 20:28, etc.

20. "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor," *i. e.*, support. If the elder must have double honor, what shall the bishop have? The apostles *neglected him*.

21. Paul did never exercise the authority that Francis doth. He did not lord it over their faith, nor send a minister but by his free consent. This is plain. I Cor. 16:12.

THE TRAVELING AND SETTLED MINISTERS WERE ALL WORKERS TOGETHER IN THE CHURCH, AND CHURCHES ON A PERFECT EQUALITY.

1. The Church at Jerusalem was rightly founded, and in Acts 15, we find several ministers in that Church, compare 11:22, Heb. 13:7. Barnabas having long labored in the Church at Antioch, "he departed to Tarsus," etc.

2. Acts 12:25, we find Barnabas and Saul returning from Jerusalem after fulfilling their ministry there.

3. Acts 13:1, 2, 3. Several ministers in the Church of Antioch, to wit: Simon, Barnabas, Lucius, Manaen, etc. Verse 15. Paul and Barnabas are sent to other places, etc.

4. Acts 14:21, etc. Paul and Barnabas return back by Lystra, confirming the churches. After this (Acts 15:35) Paul and Barnabas labor in Antioch, "with many others."

5. Acts 15:36. Paul and Barnabas are found visiting all the churches, to see how they stood. Acts 16:4. They deliver the divine decrees (which were given by the Holy Ghost) to every church, for them to observe.

6. Besides those traveling ministers, they "ordained *elders* in every city." And as it is written in the Holy Bible, in the year 1610, "they ordained elders by the election of the churches." Why did the later translators leave those words out?

7. Acts 16:14. Paul and Silas with Timothy are found in the church at Berea. Paul is removed, but the other two remain. 18:1. Paul is found in Corinth.

8. Acts 18:5, etc. *Silas* and *Timothy* coming to Paul from Macedonia. Ver. 19. Paul moves to the church at Ephesus, then in another church. Paul labors eighteen months.

9. Acts 18:27. An account that *Aquila* and *Priscilla* gave a letter of recommendation to a certain minister who was disposed to travel, and his name was *Apollos*.

10. And from their letter of recommendation, he was received by the churches of *Achaia*.

11. Acts 19:22. *Timothy* and *Erastus* are found going to the church of Macedonia, etc. Chap. 20:4, we find Paul and *seven* more traveling ministers together. Chap. 20:27, etc., the elders of the church in Ephesus receive the counsel of God from Paul.

12. Chap. 21:18, Paul is found at Jerusalem at the house of *James*, and all the elders present; the number I can not ascertain.

13. See I Cor. 3:8, etc. "He that *planteth*, and he that *watereth* are one; I *planted*, *Apollos* *watered*; but God gave the increase."

14. Chap. 3:22. Let no man glory in men; whether *Paul* or *Apollos*—*all* are yours. Chap. 4:17. *Timothy* is sent to remind them of Paul's ways as he taught in every church.

15. Chap. 12 treats on the unity of the body, and the mutual care one should have for another; but if one member suffer, all should suffer with it.

16. Chap. 16:10. "If *Timothy* come, see that he may be with you without fear; for he worketh the work of God, as I also do."

17. Verse 12. "As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you." * * * "But his will was not at all to come at this time." There was no bishop to compel him.

18. II Cor. 6:1. "We, then, as workers together with him, beseech you." Chap. 7:6, 7. Titus from the church at Corinth, comforteth the preachers in Macedonia. And again: "If any do inquire of Titus, he is my partner

19. And fellow helper concerning you." "They are the messengers of the churches and the glory of Christ." Lord, who would try to block up the way of a *holy* traveling minister?

20. In Paul's letter to Ephesus, we read in the beginning that the *body* is one, and Christ is *her* head. Chap. 4. *One* body, *one* spirit, *one* faith, *one* hope, *one* Lord, etc. Chap 5. "Christ is head and saviour of the body."

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

1. In Chap. 6, we read of a traveling minister, namely, Tychicus, sent to the church at Corinth. Phil. 2:19. "I trust in the Lord Jesus, to send Timothy shortly." See Ver. 25.

2. In Paul's letter to the church at Colosse, Chap. 1:18, we read that Christ is head of the church. "I supposed it necessary to send unto you Epaphroditus."

3. Tychicus is sent to Colosse. Read the fourth chapter, and you will find two traveling ministers sent by the apostle of the church there: also an account of five ministers with Paul.

4. Paul to the church of the Thessalonians wrote, and sent "Timothy our brother, and minister of God, and our fellow-laborer in the Gospel of Christ." Eph. 3:2, and 5: "I sent to know your faith."

5. Paul wrote this to Timothy: "Demas hath forsaken me; Crescens is gone to Galatia; Titus [is gone] to Dalmatia; only Luke is with me."

6. II Tim. 4:9, etc., ver. 12, 20. "Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus, etc. Erastus abode at Corinth; but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick."

7. Paul to Titus: "I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set things in order that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed."

8. Titus 3:12. "When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me." Ver. 13. "Bring Zenas the lawyer, and Apollos on their journey." Phil. 2:29 and 30. Col. 4:10; II Cor. 8:18, etc.

9. If what I have collected from the sacred writings will not suffice, to show the accuracy of traveling and settled ministers being on a perfect equality, and workers together in all the churches, in Scripture-times it would be of no use to draw more vouchers.

THE HIERARCHY, OR DIVINE GOVERNMENT, OR GOSPEL ORDER—THE ROYAL STANDARD OR ENSIGN FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

1. Let us now inquire for the author and reformer of the "Christian Church," or the New Testament that came down from God out of Heaven.

2. We find in Heb. 9:10, that the Lord Jesus is

the reformer. "He taketh away the first, that he might establish the second." Heb. 10:9.

3. He is the minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which Jehovah pitched, and not man. 8:2. He is the eternal Son, over his own house; and a high priest over the *Church forever*. Heb.

4. He is our Lord and only Master, and *all* we are brethren. "He that exalteth himself (above his brethren) shall be abased." See the Pope now. "Be not called Rabbi; and call no man your father." Matt. 23: 8, 9, 10 and 11.

5. Jesus, Jehovah, is the only head of the "Christian Church." This will plainly appear from the following texts: I Cor. 9-3; Eph. 1:22; 4-15; Col. 1: 18, 24; 11:19. Two heads to one body would be a monster!

6. In the *divine* book of discipline, we find that females are under certain restrictions with regard to speaking in the church. And

7. The interpretation of this will fully and clearly show Christ the only head of the body—or church.

8. In I Cor. 11:5, etc., we find that women were allowed to pray, and prophesy, with covered heads. "Male and female are all one in Christ." Luke 1:41, etc. Elizabeth and Mary shouted and praised God aloud. Compare Luke 11:27.

9. I Cor. 14:34, etc. "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law."

10. By reading the foregoing part of the chapter, and then comparing the conclusive verse, where the apostle directed decent order; we shall find, that those were foolish, contentious women, who desired the pre-eminence. I. Tim. 2:12.

11. The interpretation appears to be this, "The head of the woman is the man": Therefore, when the woman taketh upon herself man's authority, either in her own house, or in the house of God,

12. She sitteth where she ought not; she disgraceth her husband, interrupteth her ministers, and bringeth shame to herself; because she hath taken authority over her head; and she shall be called a bold usurper.

13. But a helper she is, and for that purpose was she created. And the man is commanded to love, honor, and highly respect her. "A virtuous woman is far above rubies." "A woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

14. Jesus the Lord, is head of every man, (and woman), in the church. See I Cor. 11:3. "The head of every man is Christ; the head of the woman is the man; the head of Christ is God," that is, his own eternal Godhead.

15. Woman ought to appear in the holy assembly with head covered, either naturally or artificially, by keeping on, what the man taketh off. Let her cover her face when she speaketh or prayeth in the church.

16. But for a man to wear his hat in worship, or to wear long hair at any time, is a shame, and not the custom of Scripture times. I. Cor. 11:14, etc.

THE SURE FOUNDATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

1. The house of God is situate on a spiritual eminence, known by the name of "Mount Zion." The true Church is built on the eternal rock, on which are seven pillars, according to infinite wisdom and order; with mighty corner stones.

2. This foundation God laid by his prophets and apostles. See Eph. 2:20, etc. The true government was ever divine. The *hierarchy* by which the old Jerusalem church was governed, was a true *Theocracy*. Compare Daniel 9:9, 10.

3. The Lord appointed men in those days, who were inspired prophets, called judges; something resembling apostles. They traveled in their circuits, and they taught and explained the discipline.

4. The people at length were corrupted by the example of infidels, and in order to be like them, they earnestly desired a king; as a human and visible head to go before them. Samuel mourned; but God said, "They have rejected me." I Sam. 8:7.

5. And it came to pass after those days, that Rehoboam, by his oppressive measures, caused a separation. One party was called Judah, and the other [party] was called Ephraim. See Hosea on this.

6. While Ephraim was humble, God loved him. The Lord proposed to reform the church of Ephraim, and put them back on the divine order; saying, (Hosea 13:9, 10, 11) "I will be thy king," *i. e.* thy head.

7. They refused, "Ephraim envied Judah, and Judah vexed Ephraim." Ephraim turned to idolatry.

Judah was arrogant and ambitious, through bigotry and raging prejudice, whereby many sinned against light and knowledge, even unto death. And, crucified their great Reformer.

8. John the Baptist next appeared; he was not one of the Gospel ministers, but a great prophet, and fore-runner of Christ, and His kingdom.

9. He stood as a link of chain between the Old and New Jerusalem. As Christ Jesus was appointed to be our *High Priest*, it behooved Him to fulfill every divine order.

10. Therefore, at thirty years of age (according to the flesh) he was baptized, and received the holy anointing, in the form of a dove: and thus he fulfilled that righteousness. Matt. 3:14, 15. See the Levitical laws.

11. The first Christian Church was planted in the old literal Jerusalem. From that church went forth the doctrine and discipline of our Lord, into all the world.

12. "The government shall be on his shoulder." Isaiah 9:6. "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among *my* disciples," Isaiah 8:16. Compare Isaiah 2:3. "Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

13. Truth is as a nail in a sure place. "Teach them all things whatsoever I have commanded you." "Not teaching for [practical] doctrine, the commandments of men."

14. This is the faith once delivered to the saints for which I contend. Holy doctrine begets holy faith

and that produceth a holy life. To know God in Christ, and to serve him with a perfect heart, and willing mind—is pure religion.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IS ONE, ETC.

1. My undefiled is *one*, the only one of her [heavenly] mother. Song of Solomon 6:9. The different scattered churches belong to the same *Head* and *organized* body. Those churches are elect sisters. See John's second letter and last verse.

2. The uniting plan is found in the epistle to Ephesians 4:4, etc. *One* body, *one* spirit, *one* calling, *one* hope, *one* Lord, *one* faith, *one* baptism, *one* God and Father, *one* way to heaven.

3. Who is on the Lord's side? *Now let names and parties fall*, "The Christian Church" be *one and all*. There is but one door into this body, I Cor. 12:13. And there is but one way out; that is sin. Isaiah 59:2.

4. The church is the Lord's court. Psalms 65:4. At this court ministers (who are only leading characters, and gifted members) are to be tried for disorder.

5. Was it ever heard, was it ever read between the lids of the New Testament where particular laws were laid down for the bishop, the elders, etc.?

6. The title minister, or *ministri*, signifying servants; to attend and wait, not as masters to be ministered unto, but servants for Jesus's sake: and therefore to minister.

7. See Jesus of glory, in the days of his humility, washing the disciples' feet! Bow, ye haughty prelates, and fall before the Lord thy God.

8. "My kingdom is not of this [political] world." John 18:36. William, whose surname is McKendree, was quite out of the secret, when he spake at Lane's Chapel (1797) after this manner:

9. That O'Kelly had led him astray for a long time; but by reading "church policy" he found himself in error; and was now ready to defend the Methodist Episcopal Government.

10. Let no man who believes the Scriptures, and will observe (Rev. 22:18, 19) ever venture to deny the sufficiency of the Scriptures in governing the "Christian Church." See the rules.

11. Art thou a Christian, and civil *citizen*? See Romans 12:1, 2, etc. "Let every soul be in subjection," etc. Art thou a neighbor? "Love thy neighbor (in justice, equity, truth, mercy and kindness) as thyself;" "Do by all as you would be done by."

12. In giving, lending, borrowing, etc., let this be thy rule in all things; treat others as you would reasonably desire them to treat you.

13. Art thou honestly seeking the necessities of life? "Provide for thy household." Yet, "Beware of covetousness." Luke 12:15. Seek not to be rich. "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them."

14. "Be rich in good works: ready to distribute." "Having food and raiment, be content."

15. "*Husbands* love your *wives*, and be not bitter against them." Let the *wife* see that she obey, and reverence her husband. *Parents*, provoke not your *children*; but bring them up in *Godly* discipline. Paul.

16. "Children, obey your parents." "Servants

obey your *masters*. *Masters*, give unto your servants that which is just and *equal*, (Col. 4:1,) knowing that you have a Master in heaven." "Forbear threatening."

17. Art thou a *Christian slave*? Learn patience, be as content as possible; use no provoking nor *hostile* measures for thy deliverance; but if Providence opens a legal way, embrace it.

18. The feelings of God are thus addressed by the apostle, Heb. 13:3. "Remember them that are in *bonds*, as *bound* with them; being yourselves also in the body." "Let the *oppressed* go free." Isaiah.

RULES AND REGULATIONS DIVINE.

1. As members of one body, Christ is the center of union, as also the head, from whom all receive nourishment. Love to Him is the term of communion: "If any man love not Jehovah, Jesus Christ, let him be expelled," I Cor. last chapter, 22 verse.

2. Marks of love to Jesus Christ must be judged by our willing obedience to his commands. "If ye love me keep my commandments."

3. *If any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one do not eat.* I Cor. 5:11.

4. If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him. II Thess. 3:14. If a man sin [publicly] rebuke him before all. Paul.

5. If a brother walk disorderly in thy sight, or trespass against *thee*, follow the divine rule laid down in

Matt. 18:15, etc. But, if thy brother repent, "thou shalt forgive him." Luke 17:3, 4; II Cor. 2:6, etc.

6. If disputes arise among the brethren respecting temporal matters, and they can not settle it themselves to their satisfaction, they have a plain rule. I Cor. 6:1. You need be at no loss for divine rules of discipline.

7. See the equality in the "Christian Church." Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted, but the rich in that he is made low. James 1:9, 10.

8. With regard to clothing; I read that gold rings, gaudy raiment, things very rich, and costly, things naughty and superfluous, with a fashionable conformity to a vain world, are expressly forbidden. Moderation is right.

9. A little wine is lawful, and necessary in several cases. Paul. Strong drink in cases of necessity, said Solomon. But the general rule is, "Whether you eat, or drink, etc., do all to the glory of God."

10. Again, "Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, good; think on these things." Phil. 4:8.

11. Marriage is honorable. Heb. 13:4, but Christians ought to marry in the Lord, and not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.

12. God's house is the house of prayer for all nations, saith the prophet. Yet the Church has rules to know ministers by. See Matt. 7:16; II John; Isaiah 8:20.

13. With regard to the equality and unity of ministers, traveling and settled, as workers in all churches,

in the days of truth—I am able to draw forth a cloud of witnesses; but seeing they are to be found in Acts, and the epistles of the apostles, why should I write them? “Search the Scriptures.”

14. The churches are directed to esteem and support their ministers (who need) and especially those who labor (as an ox) and rule well, giving their whole time to the business.

15. The way of partial chosen pastors, one for Paul, and one for Apollos, is the way to exalt some ministers, and debase others. It appears so unequal, that I can not think it is divine. All are yours—whether Paul or Apollos, etc.

16. To conclude, let us who fear the Lord, forsake not our select meetings; whilst the following texts remain in the Bible: Malachi 3:16, James 5:16. Hebrews 10:25. “Be ready to give an answer of the reason of your hope.” I Peter 3:15. Exhort one another, edify one another. Come ye that fear God, and I will tell what he hath done for my soul. David. See I Cor. 14. Occasionally an unbeliever might be let into these meetings, and be convinced of all, and report that God is there.

18. “Know the state of thy flock.” Solomon. That leading men were in the church, besides ministers, read Acts 15:22. That the church is the free woman, read Gal. 5:1; I Cor. 5; Matt. 18, Acts 15. “Stand fast in the liberty wherein Christ hath made thee free.” Amen.

APPENDIX B.

O'KELLY'S "PLAN OF CHRISTIAN UNION."

In Volume I, pages 39 and 44 of the *Herald of Gospel Liberty* we have an extract from the writings of Rev. James O'Kelly under the title of "A Plan of Union proposed," which we give in full as it shows his sentiments at the time:

Should I, who talk of union, attempt to set the example, or lay down a plan, where should I begin?

2. I am acquainted with those of the *Baptist order*, that my soul has fellowship with; but the door into that Church is *water*—and I can not enter because of unbelief.

3. I am acquainted with some of the *Presbyterian order*, whom I love in the Lord. But before I can be a minister in that society, I must *accede* to, or acknowledge a book called "The Confession of Faith."

4. This I can not do, until I can believe that God eternally decreed some *angels* and *men* to eternal life, and the rest to eternal death—and this is unalterably fixed.

5. Should I propose to unite with my old family, the *Methodists*, to whom my attachment is greater than to any people in the world; notwithstanding their treatment to me:

6. I could not be received, unless I could subject myself to a *human* head, and subscribe to an oppressive, and unscriptural form of government.

7. I would propose to promote Christian union by

the following method, viz: Let the *Presbyterians* lay aside the book called "The Confession of Faith."

8. Which faith, is proposed to ministers before they are received; and instead thereof, present the Holy Bible to the minister who offers himself as a fellow laborer.

9. Let him be asked if he believes that all things requisite and necessary for the church to believe and obey, are already recorded by inspired men.

10. Let the *Baptists* open a more charitable door, and receive to their communion those of a Christian life and experience; and they themselves eat bread with their Father's children.

11. Let my offended brethren, the *Methodists*, lay aside their book of discipline, and abide by the government laid down by the apostles—seeing those rules of faith and practice were given from above.

12. And answer for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. II Tim. 3:10, 17.

13. What more does the Church need, than is above inserted. Let their *Episcopal dignity* submit to Christ, who is the head and only head of his Church; and then we as brethren will walk together, and follow God as dear children.

14. O, how this would convince the world that we were true men, and not speculators—This would give satan an incurable wound; and make deism ashamed.

15. Again as each Church is called by a different name, suppose we dissolve those unscriptural names,

and for peace's sake call ourselves Christians? This would be—"The Christian Church."

16. At present, I can see no better method than what I here propose; but if any one can display a more scriptural method to *promote union*, for the Lord's sake let him show it.

17. All may see what I am at, I wish the divine Saviour to be the only head and governor of the Church, her law and center of union.

18. I wish all the faithful followers of our Lord to love one another with a pure heart fervently. Let them break down the middle wall of partition; and all break bread together.

19. Blessed will the eyes be that shall see that day. The shouts of the Christian Church will then be as terrible to the strong *holds* of satan, as the sound of the rams' horns was to *Jericho*.

20. Such a sacred plan as this, in my view would exclude boasting, God and his Christ would be exalted.

21. The followers of Christ were at the first called disciples; but at length they were called Christians. This was the new name which was spoken of by Isaiah, 62:2.

22. Those Christians compose the Christian Church, or the body of Christ. Brethren, if we are Christ's then are we Christians, from his authority, his *name*, and his divine nature.

23. This, if we would comply with, would cause the "residue of men to seek after the Lord; and all the gentiles upon whom *my name* is called, saith the Lord." Acts, 15:17.

24. The glorious *temple* erected by *Solomon* was walled, evacuated and utterly destroyed by the enemy: yea the very foundation rooted up. But the foundation of the Christian Church standeth sure, the gates of hell can not prevail.

25. Therefore, all that we have to do, brethren, is to quit our babel, and as the soul of one man, strive in union to build the "Christian Church," with the golden doctrine of love and holiness, and the silver discipline of Christ's laws.

26. If a brother can not say shibboleth as plain as you, yet let him pass and smite him not. In matters not at all essential, we may bear and forbear, until God gives more light. Come, Christian, what sayest thou?

27. Let us not consider, every *notion* of the *brain* as the established article of our faith, or creed. Let not our reason be so imposed upon as to suffer our party zeal any longer to break the bands of Christian friendship.

28. You may observe the regular soldiers who are well instructed in the inhuman business of war, although they have their favorites, and mess together, but when the alarm of war is given, and they behold the enemy approaching, they all unite under the same discipline, with life in hand:

29. They join in *compact* union, with one consent, in one common cause—against the foe; they are then led on by their leaders as the captains of their salvation, and die by each other or gain the day.

30. But it is not so with us. We too, are soldiers against infernal spirits, and the power of wickedness, our weapons spiritual:

31. And we turn our swords against one another, and each party appears to be engaged in a separate cause, as if each name had a separate God. While all confess there is but one God, and one way to heaven.

32. I have observed that when a minister of righteousness delivers the doctrine of holiness and love, in doing this he must point out the errors existing among professors, there is some *name* generally offended.

33. After a person takes offense from something delivered from the *pulpit*, the remaining part of the sermon, however spiritual, is left to that offended brother.

34. But were we all of one name, errors could be exploded from the pulpit and the press, while the divine reproofs and corrections would give conviction, without offense. We could enjoy much more satisfaction of society in this world, and be better capacitated for the society above.

35. When souls are awakened by the *voice of the Son of God* through preaching, they then incline to forsake the foolish, and associate with people of good conversation.

36. They stand in the way, and ask for the road to life; each party casts out a clew and assures the strangers that their *light* is divine. The other name will warn the seekers against the errors of that people; for they build with "wood and stubble."

37. The inquirers stand astonished at the Christians, until they are tossed to and fro, like waves of the sea, and some have turned back, and walked no more with us.

38. O, why do we wander in paths of man's invention, or cleave to the example of modern churches; and why such violent attachment to *names*, seeing the royal standard is at hand?

39. Only unanimously agree that the Holy Jesus shall be the only head of his Church, and the only center of her union, and the *one* law-giver.

40. We then as brethren, and pastors after God's own hand, can preach Christ Jesus the Lord, and we will serve—for Jesus' sake.

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